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Embodied Mind & Sixteenth-Century Poetry:

Wyatt, Vaughan Lock, & Shakespeare

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Embodied Mind & Sixteenth-Century Poetry:

Wyatt, Vaughan Lock, & Shakespeare

by

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Dedication

To Karen Wiener

International Advocate for Literacy, Scholar, Friend

*“Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I’ll rise.”*

—Maya Angelou

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Embodied Mind & Sixteenth-Century Poetry:

Wyatt, Vaughan Lock, & Shakespeare

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Abstract: Instead of assuming that sixteenth-century poetry is a form of transcendence, and instead of defining poetry as an expression of inner life or character, this dissertation argues that there are ways to interpret poetry as a tool that helped sixteenth-century subjects understand and process embodied experience. How do we know that sixteenth-century poetry was a function of the material world and the body? The evidence is in the word selections, themes, and tropes created by poets themselves. By closely examining their writings, we can trace the negotiations between sixteenth-century poetic traditions, senses, and the material world.

I explore these negotiations through three sixteenth-century poets whose works may be considered paradigmatic of the larger cultural movements that shaped their world: Sir Thomas Wyatt, the diplomat and courtier-poet in the reign of Henry VIII; Anne Vaughan Lock, a Marian exile who translated Calvin and published devotional poetry at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I; and

William Shakespeare, whose sonnet sequence published in 1609 responded to Elizabethan cultural arts at a time of energy and change. The three poets engaged in this project are distinct in class, gender, and history, and thus, each chapter is a case study that surveys embodiment in a unique context.

But the reason the three poets are viewed together (and the tie that binds them) is that they all wrote serial poems, or verse sequences. When compared across the project, important connections emerge about the cognitive power of serial poems. I argue that verse sequences are dexterous as well as able to perform cognitive “heavy lifting.” Whether it was Vaughan Lock and Wyatt who dilated scriptural exemplars and carved space for emerging evangelical ideas, or Shakespeare, who much more clearly wrote inventive verse, sixteenth-century writers used the sequence to test new possibilities and integrate prior knowledge. In this diachronic reading of poetic embodiments, we can begin to see verse sequences as a technology that merges compelling perceptual observation with high abstraction, and that allows for opposing ideas to take place across the text, resolving rigid binaries and synthesizing opposites.

Although my project attempts to view the poets together, each chapter provides evidence of significant differences across sixteenth-century poets. Although Wyatt and Vaughan Lock both utilized serial poems to test evangelical beliefs regarding conscience and penitence, they signal opposing impulses when it comes to gendered power. Moreover, Shakespeare’s sonnets are more

ostensibly amatory than religious in their overall intent. Shakespeare's meta-literary discourses, moreover, mobilized the serial format as an even more reflexive form. The project may be a skeletal map of the space between the evangelical procedures of conscience (which were themselves very reflexive) and Shakespearean procedures of mind. By comparing these differences, we may cast light on the ways in which psalm paraphrase (as a mode and a sequential format) influenced English amatory verse sequences.

The dissertation works to address unstudied connections between diverse poets from the period of Henry VIII through the early reign of James I. But the dissertation also forges new routes in Renaissance studies, by proposing directions and methods for studying literary embodiment. I believe that sixteenth-century embodiment is best viewed through the lens of religious history and print technology. Moreover, I argue that the study of sixteenth-century embodiment should also incorporate contemporary historical ideas about the mind. By engaging both New Historicism and the discourse of embodied cognition from neuroscience, finally, the project creates a comparative view of cognition, translating between empirical methods and historicist techniques in English studies.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	x
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Towards a Theory of Embodied Poetics	23
Chapter 2: Living Psalms in Sixteenth-Century England: Sir Thomas Wyatt and Embodiment.....	34
Chapter 3: Reforming the English Calvinist Body: Anne Vaughan Lock’s Psalm Paraphrase.....	78
Chapter 4: “What’s in the brain that ink may character”?: Renaissance Cognition and <i>Shake-speares Sonnets</i>	119
Chapter 5: “To the Wide World”: Gesture, Movement, and the Scandal of <i>Shake-speares Sonnets</i>	151
Epilogue	182
Creative Commons License.....	194
Works Cited	207
Vita.....	230

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Frequency of Margaret Douglas’s Hand in the Devonshire MS	2
Figure 2:	Detail of worm from Medici chapel	63
Figure 3:	<i>Globi Stelliferi</i>	88
Figure 4:	Image of VTA “Rewards Center”	128

Introduction:

Embodied Poetics in the Sixteenth Century

For the past forty years, Renaissance poetry has been studied more often as evidence of culture than as an artifact of the body. Literary scholars such as Steven May, Louis Montrose, and Arthur Marotti have emphasized how poetry was shaped by manuscript coterie, submission or resistance to royal and religious power, and interactions with continental subcultures and texts.¹ Poetry has been repeatedly defined as social: inherently communicative and created for an audience to articulate—and enact—social relations. Stephen Greenblatt emphasized in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* that writers were “embedded in systems of public signification” and that the literature we read is the evidence of this “embeddedness” (5). Poetry became a view into the structures, activities,

¹ Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and The English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1995); Steven May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: Their Poems and Their Contexts* (Pegasus Press, 1999); Louis Montrose, “The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text,” in *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts*, eds. P. Parker and D. Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986): 303-40.

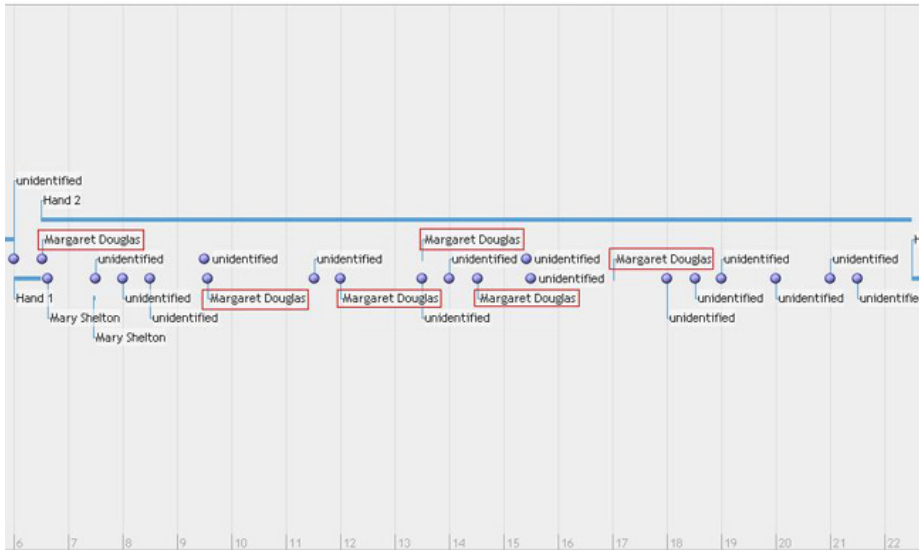


Figure 1: Simile Timeline. Frequency of Margaret Douglas's hand in the Devonshire manuscript.

and energies of an individual subjectivity (a text) forged within such shaping events as the rise of state power, the

emergence of capitalist economies,

patriarchy, and the pressures of religious piety (dominant discourses).²

The conventional top-down hierarchy of the social model, where power gives poetry its shape and texture—its very source for articulation—prompted 'new social theory' to recognize egalitarian patterns, where collectives outside of the political center authorized writing activity, or where individual men and

² Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984), 5. For other New Historicist readings of Wyatt in this manner see Stephen Foley, *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990) and Elizabeth Heale, *Wyatt, Surrey and Early Tudor Poetry* (New York: Longman, 1998).

women created evidence of their agency within written cultural productions.³ The writings of female courtiers such as Lady Margaret Douglas in the Devonshire manuscript, for example, have been cited by Elizabeth Heale, Ray Siemens, and Bradley Irish as evidence for reorienting subjectivity to account for marginal figures who claim autonomy and expression within courtly poetics.⁴ As shown by Siemens et al. in their table above, Margaret Douglas was an active participant in

³ Christopher Warley, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005); Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003).

⁴ See Ray Siemens et al., “Drawing Networks in the Devonshire Manuscript (BL Add Ms 17492): Toward Visualizing a Writing Community’s Shared Apprenticeship, Social Valuation, and Self-Validation,” *Digital Studies / Le Champ Numerique* 1.1 (2009), <http://www.digitalstudies.org/ojs/index.php/digital_studies/article/view/146/201>. See also Bradley J. Irish, “Gender and Politics in the Henrician Court: The Douglas-Howard Lyrics in the Devonshire Manuscript (BL Add. 17492),” *Renaissance Quarterly* 64: 1 (2011): 79–114. Irish sees the intimate attachment between Lord Thomas Howard and Lady Margaret Douglas, recorded in the Devonshire manuscript, to be evidence that complicates the relationship between individual acts of and state power.

the Devonshire MS, as shown by the frequency of her scribal hand. As Jonathan Gibson writes, “The material writing practices analyzed by the history of the book could be seen as a subsection of the new social history’s interest in more general individual agency.”⁵ This dissertation similarly reorients poetic subjectivity, but not by identifying or de-centering discourses of power. This dissertation upholds the tradition where poetry is seen to mediate and/or demonstrate the dynamics of power; however, simultaneously, there is another important constituting force of poetry: embodiment.

Defining Embodiment in Renaissance Studies

A definition of the term “embodiment” will help outline my contributions in this dissertation project. First, its title, “Embodied Mind and Sixteenth-Century Poetry,” refers to movements in academia towards revising Cartesian mind/body binaries. Antonio Damasio has helped to popularize the notion of mind and body integration with his book *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (2000). “The mind exists in and for an integrated organism,” writes Damasio. “Our minds would not be the way they are if it were not for the interplay

⁵ Jonathan Gibson, “The Perdita Project: Women’s Writing, Manuscript Studies and XML Tagging,” *New Technologies in Renaissance Studies*, ed. William R. Bowen and Raymond G. Siemens, I Vol., Vol. I, (Tempe, AZ: Iter/Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 230.

of body and brain during evolution, during individual development, and at the current moment.”⁶ Currently, scholars tend to apply the term “embodiment” to correct the dominance of intellect or mind with regard to the mind/body discussion. By referencing embodied mind, I am situating this project in those conversations about “embodied cognition.”

While Demasio emphasizes neurons and the role of physiology in brain and body to explain embodied mind, I want to define embodied mind in ways that resonate with earlier periods. In particular, my chapters on Wyatt and Vaughan Lock emphasize that in the sixteenth century, the body/mind connection was defined through Reformation practices and beliefs. That is, embodied mind can be related to evangelical subjectivities. For example, in Wyatt’s *Paraphrase*, the topic of Chapter 2, the character of King David claims that he erred when he seduced Bathsheba and “cleaved to the flesh” rather than attending to the sacred law (the word).⁷ The penitent body in the *Paraphrase* was an articulation of

⁶ Anthony Demasio, *Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 2005), xx. The book was first published with the same title in hardcover (New York: Grosset Putnam, 1994).

⁷ Ll. 555–58. All Wyatt quotations and line numbers are from R. A. Rebholz, ed., *Sir Thomas Wyatt: The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin, 1978).

biblical values, sexual morality, and Reformed ideas of salvation. Embodiment was inflected by emerging Protestant hermeneutics.

The noun “embodiment” was not recorded until the nineteenth century.⁸ At that time, embodiment signified that human subjects were the site for some spiritual entity or principle to come into a material form. If we look earlier, moreover, the sixteenth century had a verb form, “embody.” According to the *OED*, “embody” meant “to put into a body; to invest or clothe (a spirit) with a body.”⁹ This verb further proves my point that in the sixteenth century, the term “embodied” signified the movement between flesh and the soul, *corpus et spiritus*, the ensoulment of flesh, or conversely, the enfleshment of the soul. In short, the meaning of embodiment was theological and ontological: the concept

⁸ The *OED* says that embodiment meant the entity in which something is materialized, such as the site for “the corporeal ‘vesture’ or ‘habitation’ of (a soul).” Its figurative sense similarly shows a movement from abstract to concrete: “That in which (a principle, an abstract idea, etc.) is embodied, actualized, or concretely expressed.”). *OED* Online. June 2012. Oxford University Press. 28 August 2012.

⁹ See also examples from the *OED*: “1548 E. Gest *Treat. againste Masse* sig. Ciii, “No more then the sayd holy ghost is adjudged embodied or enharted.”

hinged on moving *between* states of being, with the assumption of a spiritual state at the basis of this embodiment.

The sense of “embodiment” in the early sixteenth century, moreover, was emphatically textual. And the text in question, I would argue, was the Bible. My emphasis on sacred literature helps us to recover fields in philology and religious studies that hold promise for discussing the mind/body connection. For example, it is historicist scholars who have illuminated the Protestant exaltation of textuality (and related practices such as humanist philology) as defining English literary culture.¹⁰ Scholars such as Barbara Lewalski and John N. King have long established how issues of *sola scriptura* and vernacular translation influenced the voice of Reformation poetry.¹¹ In her study of Protestant poetics in the

¹⁰ For an account of how philology is a transformative aspect of both literary and artistic hermeneutics in the Renaissance, see David Hotchkiss Price, *Albrecht Dürer’s Renaissance: Humanism, Reformation, and the Art of Faith* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2003).

¹¹ As A. G. Dickens writes about the earlier Henrician period, “In England, as elsewhere, the Protestant Reformation sought first and foremost to establish a gospel-Christianity, to maintain the authority of the New Testament evidence over mere church traditions and human inventions masquerading as universally

seventeenth century, for example, Barbara Lewalski argues for the “the pervasive Protestant emphasis upon the Bible as a book, as God’s Word encapsulated in human words and in the linguistic features of a variety of texts.”¹² This centering on the primary Christian text was, Lewalski argues, a main feature of Protestant poetics and even a homogeneous feature in the seventeenth century.¹³ Lewalski and others understood that the wide-scale dissemination of the Bible was influential on the wider culture. In short, these scholars have studied sacred literatures as both technology and practice.

It is important to note that while this dissertation project will integrate a sixteenth-century sense of embodiment, the historical use appears contrastive to current uses of the term “embodied” or “embodiment,” which are agnostic with regard to spiritual states of being, and which emphasize materialist enterprises of ecology. The word “embodiment” is currently being deployed in fields of social science and humanities, especially in studies of embodied cognition. Here,

approved truths and ‘unwritten verities.’” *The English Reformation*, 2nd ed.

(University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1989), 13.

¹² Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), ix.

¹³ See James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007), 176.

embodiment refers to organic life, individual agents and bodies, contingencies, and systems of ecology. If current ideas of “embodiment” (from embodied cognition and neurocriticism) tend to apply an orthodox, universalizing biologism, our reading of Renaissance embodiments will complicate and deconstruct these master narratives with each case study. I will engage these contemporary readings of embodiment here in the introduction and especially in the chapters on Shakespeare.

This dissertation will define embodiment in ways connected to these new discoveries. Contemporary theories of embodiment help us move away from a social constructivist view, and gain new insights into textual influences. Consider the work of Margaret Syverson, who has clarified the concept of embodiment for literacy and composition studies. For Syverson, “embodiment” is a distinct feature of textual ecologies. In *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition*, she writes, “Writers, readers, and texts have physical bodies and consequently not only the content but the process of their interaction is dependent on, and reflective, of, physical experience.”¹⁴ Here embodiment means the ways in which meta-cognitive phenomena (such as written texts, books, or metaphors) reflect relations within the material world.

¹⁴ See Margaret A. Syverson, *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1999), 12.

Drawing on cultural cognitivists such as George Lakoff, Syverson agrees that literary content is based in “physical experience and interactions.”¹⁵ In a sense, embodiment is seen as meta-structure—maybe even a force—that influences the format and content of texts. Texts are best read as a network of social, phenomenological, and temporal factors, where “embodiment” denotes how the networks (texts) are collectives of material influences. In Syverson’s sense, “embodiment” is not a universalizing biologism, but a schematic for putting different elements of a process into more conspicuous relation to each other. In Syverson’s words, “Texts often become a representation of the physical body of their writers, just as writers become the embodiment of their texts.”¹⁶ This dissertation intends to draw on this valence of “embodiment” throughout the project, by noting the ways in which verse sequences are unique embodiments of writers’ experiences, beliefs and environments. Indeed, I believe that these ideas of ecology synchronize well with the religious-studies approaches that are formative in Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁵ Ibid., xv.

¹⁶ Syverson, *The Wealth of Reality*, 56.

To summarize, this dissertation will define embodiment in the following ways:

- With regard to the Cartesian body/mind connection critiqued by Demasio et al., we will adopt the general corrective that we need to attend more to the body's role in cognition.
- Ecology studies is an important influence, with its axiom that a larger network of forces creates a text (with the social constitution being just one vector of forces).
- This dissertation will historicize the sense of embodied mind by looking (especially in Chapters 2 and 3) at religious history and the body/mind connection as they were understood by subjects in the English Reformation.
- It will note the ontological and theological procedures of Renaissance embodiment, while noting the agnosticism and scientism of contemporary studies of embodiment. I ask how we reconcile these contrastive histories and practices.
- As we currently contend with transformative concepts of embodiment (from technocriticism and cognitive studies), this dissertation will attempt to take first steps toward making sense of these data in relation to traditional historicist and New Historicist paradigms.

- Finally, we will generally think of language as a tool, and look at poetry as an object, considering format, the structures of verse sequence, print technology, and tropes. This orientation of poetry as a tool will help to mediate between the various methods this dissertation deploys.

In the next sections, I will outline current studies of embodiment in the field of Renaissance studies to connect my definition to the field as it stands, and will give chapter descriptions in order to demonstrate how the texts in each case study adopt particular processes and meanings of embodiment.

Current Approaches to Embodiment in Renaissance Studies

By drawing out and reading content related to embodiment, my dissertation addresses an enduring set of concerns, as studies of early modern gender have focused on the body for almost half a century. The sexual politics of textuality have been made evident by waves of medieval and Renaissance scholars, notably by feminist scholars, who assess women's exclusion from print authorship.¹⁷

¹⁷ See for example, Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, 2nd ed., ed. Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz, and Susan Stuard (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 175–202.

Gender and Embodiment in Renaissance Studies

Suzanne Hull notes in that “in the first 100 years of English printing there is relatively little direct evidence that books were being published with a female audience in mind.”¹⁸ Hull and others recovered the absent or ill-used female body in Renaissance poetics, which has since opened up to the recovery also of gay and lesbian precedents, and a destabilized, complex sense of the Renaissance masculine body. In *Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe*, Jessica Munns and Penny Richards suggest how approaches to gendered politics have become more nuanced, as scholars have attended to Renaissance culture. Their approach is to “challenge traditional orthodoxies with regard to the dominant role played by men. . . . However, they also challenge attempts to generalize from one country or period to another.”¹⁹ For embodiment in the early modern period, we can draw from a vast set of critical texts related to the subject. Indeed, as Munns and Richards demonstrate, not only has early modern literary studies been attendant to the body, it has increasingly attended with specificity and care.

¹⁸ Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475–1640* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1982), 9.

¹⁹ Jessica Munns and Penny Richards, eds., “Introduction,” *Gender, Power, and Privilege in Early Modern Europe* (London: Pearson, 2003), 6.

Textual Studies and Embodiment

Textual studies also provides a rich index for describing textual embodiment, such as the work of Wendy Wall in *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (1993). Wall has emphasized how gender is the primary idiom for negotiating authorship in print formats versus in manuscript. As Wall writes:

Sixteenth-century writers draw on a gendered and sexualized language—replete with figures of courtly love, cross-dressing, voyeurism, and female desire—when they legitimate publication. . . . Gender thus provides a focal point. . . for querying the issues of authorship, privacy, and class energized by the spread of print technology.²⁰

Sexuality and gender were used, as Wall says, to “legitimate publication,” or to confront the socioeconomic and moral conundrums of print culture. Wall focuses on the incorporation of gendered thinking into thinking about print technology. While I am interested in how gendered values are embedded within texts, I am even more interested in how writers are coming to terms with the material formats of writing as part of an epistemology. If feminist and queer scholars of feminist literature have indicated the ways literacy affected subjectivity, then how can we also open up to how literacy affected the lived events of early moderns? If

²⁰ See Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), 6.

Wall and others, such as Jonathan Goldberg,²¹ have shown us the intersection of writing and sex, how can we build to examine writing as part of the life process?

The Embodiment(s) of Print as a Technology

By being attendant to the ways that printed forms affect views of the body and world, moreover, we can avoid a major pitfall in historicist methods, which Walter Ong identifies as the “relentless dominance of textuality in the scholarly mind.”²² That is, a print-based society unable to reflect on its own modes of expression perpetuates the belief in pristine discourse patently transmitting ideas. Renaissance studies will not be able to meditate on poetry as a technological force, unless we can think more broadly of textuality as a technology, or medium. Thus, this project draws on works such as Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy* (1982), where Ong argues that writing culture is not a self-evident, progressive evolution from an oral past, but rather, text is a situated technological development. “Because we have by today so deeply interiorized writing, made it so much a part of ourselves,” he writes, “we find it difficult to

²¹ Johnathan Goldberg, ed., *Queering the Renaissance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1994), and *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992).

²² Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2000), 10.

consider writing to be a technology as we commonly assume printing and the computer to be."²³ As digital (post-print) culture becomes ubiquitous, it becomes easier to view written text as a historically specific medium.²⁴

Consideration of print is key to understanding political and literary features of the Tudor period, the point of focus for this dissertation.²⁵ At its heart, this

²³ Ibid., 80.

²⁴ It is important to note that medievalists and early modernists—far from ignoring how technology inflected the body—have continuously encountered print culture in England to understand social change. See Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979). See also John H. Leinhard, *How Invention Begins: Echoes of Old Voices in the Rise of New Machines* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006).

²⁵ In *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press*, Christopher J. Warner notes that under Henry VIII many writers were engaged in writing state propaganda rather than literature, a sentiment echoed in *Patriotism, Power and Print*, where Gillian Brennan argues that printed propaganda allowed a gradual development of English nationality. See Christopher J. Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 1998); see also Gillian Brennan, *Patriotism, Power and*

dissertation builds on the work of Walter Ong, Roger Chartier, David Cressy, and others who study the history of written textuality, as well as the work of Barbara Lewalski and John N. King, who give us a material history considering the influence of sacred texts on culture of the sixteenth century.²⁶ By discussing how texts mediate the mind, we will explore how, as Ong says, “writing structures consciousness.”²⁷

Chapter 1: Towards a Theory of Embodied Poetics

Chapter 1 presents theories and methods of embodied poetics, by stating the basic assumptions of such a method. I outline the way that sixteenth-century poets talked about the relationship between form and matter. Whether or not these writings are empirically true, they are helpful in discovering a comparative view of embodiment. I assess the value of contemporary discoveries from body

Print: National Consciousness in Tudor England (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2003).

²⁶ For more on technological history of the Renaissance, see Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1995); David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980); Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*; Simpson, *Burning to Read*.

²⁷ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 77–114.

studies, social science, technocriticism, cognitive studies, and ecology studies. However, I maintain that the method of the dissertation is to engage historical notions of embodiment, as a way of paying attention to how poets perceived writing as an influence on the life process.

Chapter 2: Living Psalms in Sixteenth-Century England:

Sir Thomas Wyatt and Embodiment

Chapter 2 makes available content from the devotional poem(s) of Sir Thomas Wyatt, *Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms*. Wyatt documented a visceral doctrine of the penitent sinner as a fevered body, with metaphors of conscience as a gnawing worm, and God as a healing leech. I argue that the serial poem (Wyatt's paraphrase of seven penitential psalms and narrative inter-prologues) developed an embodied view of conscience integrating late medieval and emerging Renaissance devotional traditions. The poem sequence performed "heavy lifting" as a format in which to negotiate religious and literary experience. The sequence also played out important negotiations of gendered experience, especially in Wyatt's iconoclastic metaphors of the body. One contribution of the dissertation project is that it maps a cultural continuum, where English reform poetry associated the male body with textuality, and where the female body was potentially disruptive (arguably even antithetical) to these emerging Protestant embodiments.

Chapter 3: Reforming the English Calvinist Body:

Anne Vaughan Lock's Psalm Paraphrase

Chapter 3 addresses embodied motifs in the poems of the merchant-class writer and Marian exile Anne Vaughan Lock. Vaughan Lock used imagery of skin disease, metaphors of pharmaceuticals, digestive metaphors, and descriptions of abject emotions in a mode that I have termed the Calvinist grotesque. The sequence functioned as a living text, again suggesting the heavy lifting of the verse form. By dilating Psalm 51 into a series of courtly forms, Vaughan Lock worked through the cognitive and embodied difficulties of her moment. Rather than merely expressing religious belief, Vaughan Lock united an array of difficulties and paradoxes, such as her role as a woman and her experience of exile in Geneva. Vaughan Lock's grotesque created a space to explore incongruous ideas and feelings about embodiment. I also add to the current discussion of Vaughan Lock's writings by arguing that while her texts have been Anglicized by scholarship, her writings can actually be seen as an expression of her experience abroad, related to her understanding of geopolitics, religion, and ethnicity.

Chapter 4: "What's in the brain that ink may character"?:

Renaissance Cognition and Shakespeare's Sonnets

How does a Renaissance sonnet sequence relate to the early modern concepts of the brain? Using as my litmus Shakespeare's use of the word "brain,"

I compare the sonnets to the narrative poems (*The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*). The narrative poems, I argue, present the brain as a site of perception. However, I chart how in the sonnets Shakespeare begins to see the brain as the site of language production. Arguably, Shakespeare's sonnets are one of first sites where the word "brain" is linked to oral and written language, and one of the first sites where the brain and the text are repeatedly and explicitly compared as competing sites of memory. Across this chapter, I intervene on Shakespeare's discourses with contemporary cognitive discoveries, such as technogenesis (the way memory technologies influence human evolution), BAI (Brain Artifact Interfaces), and distributed cognition. I attempt to scale our understanding and create a comparative view of cognition. At stake in my reading, finally, is a historicized understanding of the brain from the point of view of Shakespeare. I also assess some earlier criticism as a potentially fruitful arena for recovering cognitive readings about the sonnets, since these readings are attuned to meta-literary themes of mind, cognitive complexity, and imagination.

Chapter 5: "To the Wide World":

Gesture, Movement, and the Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets

My analysis bypasses the politics of scandal that have dominated most readings of Shakespeare's sonnets for the past twenty years, attending instead to spatial and gestural references. These gestural references signal what

Guillemette Bolens has termed “kinesic intelligence,”²⁸ or what Vittorio Gallese and Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski have called “feeling of body.”²⁹

Shakespeare’s motifs of gesture, movement, and travel have received little attention, I argue, despite the fact that these can act as larger framing devices for postcolonial, queer theory, and feminist approaches to the sonnets. Rather than isolating references related to desire and sexual scandal, I propose that the dynamics between the speaker and the addressees should be framed within broader spatial and cognitive indicators. My reading helps us to see that an empirical technique (one that reads cognition and embodied mind) need not supplant a politicized method. Indeed, the last section of this chapter is an attempt to interweave cultural studies and empirical techniques in ways that are responsible, unexpected, and suggestive of new opportunities for research. What were poetry’s formative effects on nature, the mind, and body? This dissertation will explore how the unique affordances of poetry can give vitality to regimes of textual power. In the sixteenth century, moreover, the affordances of poetry

²⁸ Guillemette Bolens, *The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2012), 19.

²⁹ Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski and Vittorio Gallese, “How Stories Make Us Feel: Toward an Embodied Narratology,” *California Italian Studies* 2.1 (2011): 4. Accessed via <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/ismrg_cisj>.

evolved alongside sites of power and society in a process of change that, we might say, altered Renaissance life-worlds on many levels.

Chapter 1:

Towards a Theory of Embodied Poetics

The development of embodied poetics³⁰ allows us to see how human corporeality and literary traditions affect each other and interact with culture at large. Writing a poem is no pure art leaving the physical world undisturbed. Poems are blotted and scratched onto paper, transcribed into one artifact from another, and passed from person to person. Poetic works are handled by human hands and fingers, vocalized with the palate, tongue, throat, and teeth. Reading

³⁰ I found that the exact term “embodied poetics” had already been in use, if only on occasion, in English studies (see below). However, I think that the term could have greater explanatory force if we used “embodied poetics” to presage a broader commitment to the connections between literary form and human embodiment in the field of English. See Donald Lavigne, “Embodied Poetics in Martial 11,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 138, No. 2 (Autumn 2008): 275–311; Tina Chen, “Unraveling the Deeper Meaning: Exile and the Embodied Poetics of Displacement in Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*,” *Contemporary Literature* 39 (Spring 1998): 77–98. See also Jason R. Rudy, *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2009); see also John M. Jones, “Embodied Rhetoric: Memory and Delivery in Networked Writing,” diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2010.

poetry, similarly, does not transcend earth-bound circumstances. Poems are lifted up to the face (or leaned over) to be looked across by the eyes. Poetry is no less visceral for its enculturation: that is, by the fact that literate practices are imparted through the social order. Meta-poetic tropes suggest the basic assumptions of epistemologies and embodiments derived from Renaissance literacy. This awareness allows us to pinpoint poetic content that, itself (*repeatedly, overtly*), reminds readers that life intermingles with poetry's mediating force. Embodied poetics assumes that not only were Renaissance subjects mapped within embodied structures, but they were aware of points of contact with texts, genres, and print and manuscript traditions.

As a form of powerful, eloquent rhetoric, poetry would be an acute way for early modern society to assign values to objects, connect affects to physicality, and project social and sexual behaviors. We can attempt to parse the relative impact of imaginative writing (thematic content) within the large set of life processes dictated by early modern literacy. This dissertation, then, will negotiate between social theory and emerging object-oriented views of writing and literature.³¹

³¹ Object-oriented ontology (OOO) and object-oriented rhetoric (OOR) are emerging fields, growing in popularity with roots in philosophy, linguistics, and social science. For discussions of the most current debates on object-oriented

We can consider poetry an object, if we use frameworks related to what N. Katherine Hayles has called “media-specific analysis.” The physical means of writing and reading themselves become another force shaping the literary matter.³² Poetry’s embodiment, its material format, influences the diction, the words, the length, the tone, and the themes of the literary text.³³ As Wendy Wall has said, “the text [is] an object as well as a symbolic form.”³⁴ Or, as Hayles has observed in more recent work, “We make tools, but then tools make us. That’s

rhetoric, see Alex Reid <<http://www.alex-reid.net/object-oriented-rhetoric/>> and Ian Bogost <<http://www.bogost.com/>>. See also Ian Bogost and Levi Bryant, eds., *Object-oriented Ontology* (Punctum Press: forthcoming).

³² See N. Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

³³ In a recent talk at the University of Texas at Austin, Steven W. May argued that it was the replacement of vellum with paper, not the emergence of print machines, that effectively caused the rapid spread of Renaissance ideas. May’s talk was titled “Renaissance Discourse: From Script to More Script.” Harrington Symposium: The Archives and the Profession of Literary Study. February 2010.

³⁴ Wall, *The Imprint of Gender*, 5.

technogenesis.”³⁵ It is this shuttling, complex interaction between object and subject, between body and culture, which energizes my project.

This dissertation works from a set of important assumptions:

1. There is some momentary, experiential quality of interacting with an object that is singular, intimate, and embodied.
2. Secondly, the social order always precedes that singular moment and informs it.
3. Finally, it must also be true that the singular moment can interpenetrate the social order.

In this view, poetry would be categorized as an extension of the human mind, and importantly, an extension of the body, or prosthesis. Scholars in body

³⁵ See N. Katherine Hayles, “Hyper and Machine Reading and Writing: Assessing the Gains and Losses,” Computers and Writing Conference (Ann Arbor, MI: 21 May 2011). Via <<http://vimeo.com/24403444>>. Hayles says, “Technogenesis [. . .] at the dawn of the human species, human evolution from the beginning was bound up with the development of tools.” See also her recent publication of this research in *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2012).

studies have argued that the prosthesis is not separate but incorporated into the body image.³⁶ As Elizabeth Grosz describes in *Volatile Bodies*:

Objects, implements, and instruments with which the subject continually interacts become, while they are being used, intimate, vital, even libidinally cathected parts of the body image. These objects and implements need not be small [. . .] In driving, the car becomes part of the body image. [. . .] The surgeon would be unable to operate without scalpel and medical instruments being incorporated into the surgeon's body image. The writer would be unable to type, the musician unable to perform, without the word processor or musical instrument becoming part of the body image.³⁷

Grosz cites items we more commonly think of as tools (car, scalpel, typewriter, word processor, musical instrument). The idea of prosthesis will need to be developed, to accommodate poetry's function as a "textual" prosthesis, a more abstract and conceptual object, one that challenges the boundaries between idea and thing. This dissertation will try to understand the ways in which poetry as a "textual object" interacts with the body through the acts of reading, transcribing, compiling, and printing. Consider, as a metaphor for these points of

³⁶ Contemporary studies of prosthesis as brain interfaces are discussed in later chapters, especially the work of Lambros Malafouris, "The Brain-Artifact Interface (BAI): A Challenge for Archaeology and Cultural Neuroscience," *SCAN* 5(2010): 268.

³⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), 80.

contact, the corner of a paper dark with oil from paging hands, the callous on the finger from the writing instrument, narratives of a human subject plagued by sleepless nights caused by too much imaginative stimuli, or the eyes taking in a word or line of words.

As the objects in question have already been cathected from a larger cultural discourse, then it is difficult to say these object relations are primal. Since every object has social meaning, holding a pen, for example, can never be a natural activity. Indeed, cultural materialists have insisted on the political nature of cultural production.³⁸ Poetry's embodiment, therefore, does not elide or gloss over social realities. These sets are, inarguably, mutually constitutive. If the

³⁸ As Douglas Bruster writes, "Cultural materialism can be defined as a critical practice concerned with the cultural embeddedness of aesthetic objects—from plays to piano concertos to pop music—and the inescapably political nature of all cultural production and interpretation" ("New Materialism in Renaissance Studies," *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Curtis Perry (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001), 231). See also Thomas J. Schelereth, *Material Culture: A Research Guide* (Lawrence, KS: UP of Kansas, 1985); Michelle O'Malley, "A Pair of Little Gilded Shoes: Commission, Cost and Meaning of Renaissance Footwear," *Renaissance Quarterly* 63.1 (Spring 2010), 45–83.

literary text implies a deep relationship with the human body, it is also true that the human form (mind *and* body) is calloused and muscled into conformity with the media object.

The relationship between the body and the text is the primary research method of this dissertation. But finally, the dissertation will begin to explore a more radical view of literary activity. We will begin to posit (although we will not exhaust the subject) the way that literate practices of the Reformation period were productive of forms and epistemes. The intersection of language and epistemology is what Donna Haraway calls the “the tropic quality of materiality [. . .] the implosion of semioticity and materiality,”³⁹ or what Bruno Latour refers to when he calls for the recognition of the ontologies of “quasi-objects.”⁴⁰

³⁹ Donna Haraway, “Cyborgs, Dogs, and Companion Species 2000.” Invited talk at the European Graduate School. Video available from <<http://youtu.be/-yxHIKmMI70>>.

⁴⁰ “Quasi-objects” are, as Latour explains, “strange new hybrids,” or the alternating epistemologies between objects of culture and objects of science. “Quasi-objects” are also aligned with “quasi-subjects,” those human entities that also are “partitioned” between social and scientific categories. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993), 52–4.

Technocritical theorists such as Latour and Haraway recalibrate what we think of as mimesis, or the way that literary texts reflect back on the world. Views of art that identify an epistemology of texts help us understand that art moves us to interact with the world according to specified patterns.

Arriving at a suitable scope for this dissertation means that I will not be able to fully address the theoretical and disciplinary questions raised by embodied poetics. While the theory of embodied poetics calls for a more concerted effort to see literacy along a materialist continuum, the chapters show that connecting poetry and life is not a simple task. Our work remains qualitative (describing *potential* connections between texts and life), rather than proscriptive (pinpointing any *exact location* where textual materiality occurs). The end goal of this embodied-poetics approach is to raise the stakes for literary representation by starting to describe ways in which texts participate in the life process. In this dissertation, I will not categorically outline the epistemes implied by Renaissance literacy. I will delimit my study here according to what people in the Renaissance said about those epistemes. The dissertation simply suggests that textual content, rather than a meaning with a transcendent disposition, qualifies as a material instantiation with an ontological status. This suggestion (that literature is ontological) is posed as a question, rather than proclaimed as an axiom. How does literature, the transference of life into various representational and abstract forms, signal its own station on the spectrum of materiality?

As a starting point, this dissertation identifies references about how poetry is written and how it is read: meta-poetic subject matter, writing that is about writing, poetry that is about poetry, reading about how to read. We can see this commentary when sixteenth-century writers raised such questions about art and life. Sir Philip Sidney hypothesized the incorporation of poetry into human activity when he distinguished philosophy from poetry in *The Defense of Poesy* (1595). Poetry is superior, Sidney argued, since it can bridge the gap between “gnosis” and “praxis,” inspiring us “to be moved to do that which we know” (LI. 583; 599).⁴¹ In a more global assessment, George Puttenham’s *The Art of English Poesy* (1590) delineated the qualities of nature versus those of poetry. “In some cases we say art is an aid and coadjutor to nature, and a furtherer of her actions to a good effect,” Puttenham wrote. “In another respect art is not only an aid and coadjutor to nature in her actions, but an alterer of them, and in some sort a surmounter of her skill” (3.25: 382–3).⁴² These examples allow us to see a rich

⁴¹ Quotations and line numbers from *The Defense of Poesy* are taken from *Sir Philip Sidney: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989).

⁴² Quotations and page numbers from Puttenham are taken from *The Art of English Poesy by George Puttenham: A Critical Edition*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2007). See the Introduction for the

lineage of discourses from the early modern period about poetic form as a part of the life process.

Emphasizing the living vitality of reading and writing, embodied poetics attempts to integrate views of literate activity with what we continue to learn about the human life form. “No matter how abstract the subjects of one’s thoughts,” cognitive literary critic Ellen Spolsky writes, “they are produced upon a material base of flesh, blood, neurons, and neurotransmitters.”⁴³ I propose, finally, that emphasizing embodiment is to deepen our understanding of the ontology of poetics, and to see its dissemination not just into cultural economies but into the bodies and organic worlds of Renaissance subjects. Writing is always bodied forth,⁴⁴ an artifact of the bodies of individual writers and group bodies, carrying the residue and wear implied by contact with the human form. In short, this method explores how human beings translate their material experience into

editors’ comments on Puttenham’s delineations of poetry as an art and craft, as opposed to nature (47–49).

⁴³ Ellen Spolsky, “Literacy after Iconoclasm in the English Reformation,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39.2 (2009): 305–330.

⁴⁴ David K. Anderson of Oklahoma State University used the phrase “body forth” during summary remarks at the Texas Institute of Literature and Textual Studies (TILTS) Summer Symposium 2010 at the University of Texas at Austin.

abstraction. Abstract ideas are integrated within a material network. Ellen Spolky suggests ways in which “works of art [. . .] might intervene in and redirect the life around them.”⁴⁵ To study the embodied nature of poetics, therefore, is not to subvert the social meaning of poetry. Instead, embodied poetics engages literary works as living texts, grafted onto the world of human society and biology, supplying lifeblood, which, though imaginary, is expressed upon the real.

⁴⁵ Ellen Spolsky, “Making ‘Quite Anew’: Brain Modularity and Creativity,” *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2010), 84–102: p. 85.

Chapter 2:

Living Psalms in Sixteenth-Century England:

Sir Thomas Wyatt and Embodiment

*Non sanza spavento de l'anima,
che s'inchino a la effigie che nel primo apparire
le rimase impressa nel seno.*

—Pietro Aretino, 1536⁴⁶

The form that Love had printed in his brest
He honour'th it as thing of things best.

—Sir Thomas Wyatt c. 1540

Sir Thomas Wyatt's *Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms* opens with a sexual euphemism.⁴⁷ In the verse prologue, Wyatt translates the event of King David's catching sight of Bathsheba as she bathed.⁴⁸ Wyatt tells how David

⁴⁶ Pietro Aretino, *I Sette Salmi de la Penitentia di David* (Venice, 1536):

"Not without fear of the soul / he bowed to the portrait that appeared / and it remained imprinted in the breast."

⁴⁷ CLII, 15–16. All Wyatt quotations are from R. A. Rebholz, ed., *Sir Thomas Wyatt: The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin, 1978). Quotations from the *Paraphrase* are cited with line numbers but without the poem number (CLII in Rebholz). All other Wyatt poems are cited with the number given by Rebholz. For notes on the *Paraphrase* in particular, see Rebholz, *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 452–453.

⁴⁸ As Clare L. Costley writes, "From the beginning of the sixteenth century it became customary to represent the Penitential Psalms with an image of David

made Bathsheba the object of his sexual conquest, and then, as the narrative goes, of how David intentionally sent her husband Uriah to die in battle. Like the Italian satirist Pietro Aretino, Wyatt refers to Bathsheba as David's "idol" and uses the idea of bowing to an image, with the word "honour'th" standing in for the sexual act.⁴⁹ Transgressive sex (and its resultant murderous jealousy) was like worshipping false idols. David in his sexual intrigue was considered analogous to the pagan enemies of Israel, or in Aretino and Wyatt's contexts, sixteenth-century papists who, Protestants charged, continued to worship devotional objects.

Wyatt amplified the references from his Italian source text, creating indicators that echoed across English traditions of text and image. Instead of Aretino's reference to Bathsheba as a painted image ("la effigie"), Wyatt used a term common as well to the printing process: the word "form" for Bathsheba's naked body. In a second euphemism implying print technology, Wyatt said that David "Yield[ed] to the figure and the frame." "Figure" and "frame" were common

observing Bathsheba as she bathes" ("David, Bathsheba, and the Penitential Psalms," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 57:4 (Winter 2004): 1235).

⁴⁹ For an alternative English translation of Aretino, see John Hawkins, *Paraphrase upon the Seaven Penitentiall Psalmes of the Kingly Prophet* (1635): "For he bowed to this image, / which in its first presenting its object, / Made impression in his breast."

to both English painting and print. Finally, from Aretino's intransitive formulation ("*le rimase impressa*"), Wyatt created an active construction: "Love had printed [the form of Bathsheba] in his breast." Likely referencing the classical figure of Cupid, Wyatt personified "Love" as a sixteenth-century printer. Wyatt signaled to the reader erotic, religious, and textual forces that appeared to converge in a complex matrix. At its core, this matrix connected the mechanics of cultural production to the initiation of English reform lyric.⁵⁰ The interplay of visual tradition and textual tradition, moreover, offered prescient meta-commentaries within the context of the suppression of the monasteries.

We can find similar, if less direct, sexual euphemism in Wyatt's satiric ballad, "The time that mirth did steer my ship." Wyatt wrote, "Then in my book wrote my mistress, / 'I am yours, you may well be sure / And shall be while my life doth dure.'" ⁵¹ This time the erotic stand-in was manuscript circulation, with the lady *writing* a rhyming couplet into the speaker's *book* . . . implying, subtly, the

⁵⁰ Chris Stamatakis has recently written of the related "glossing conceits": "Wyatt's David, subject to scribal threats, becomes a text riddled with combative, distorting, or falsifying marginal annotations [. . .] where Wyatt's sources lack this chirographic imagery and glossing conceit." *Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Rhetoric of Rewriting: "Turning the Word"* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 79.

⁵¹ XCII: LI. 5–7.

sexual act. Here, the speaker faces his disenchantment with the clichéd rhyme, for the words are a devastating reminder that her promise—passionately loving devotion for an entire lifespan—contrasts with the unfolding of events.

It is notable that Wyatt represented the male figure through lexes of writing. In both poems, the male figure was imagined as a body: a body acting as the metaphorical surface for transcription or impression or—in other words—a writing surface. In the psalm paraphrase, the personification was direct, as David's "brest" was printed with Bathsheba: David's body was the paper. And, similarly, if the euphemism is allowed in "The time that mirth did steer my ship," the speaker's "book" is a metonym for his body. The female courtier has usurped the pen (the phallus) and written on or in him.

Tudor poetry, as much as it communicated the inner life of the subject, commented, as we can see, on the material technologies of communication, sex roles, power, and corporeality. Wyatt's euphemisms demonstrate that early moderns were cognizant of the landscape of textual production, and that they were highly invested in shaping the embodied values of those textual landscapes. For example, in "The time that mirth did steer my ship," it is interesting that Wyatt's poem records female participation in manuscript poetry. Wyatt signals to his audience, moreover, that female courtly writers were corruptive to native English literary heritage. Wyatt comments on the psychologically and ethically dangerous world of courtly wordplay, representing the lady's words

as a *body* that lacks moral and sexual restraint. "Aye me! Alas!," the speaker laments, "What words were These! Incontinent I might find them so!" The *OED* holds that in the sixteenth century, the word "incontinent" was related to being "unchaste" of body and mind.⁵² In Wyatt's lyric, the woman is implicated in the contaminating bonds of courtly interplay.⁵³ Similarly, in Wyatt's psalm translation,

⁵² The *OED* defines the word as "wanting in restraint" as in a sexual manner, and cites 1526 W. Bonde, *Pylgrimage of Perfection* iii. sig. aviii, "He is so incontynent and vnchast: y^t his mynde is blynde. "incontinent, adj.1 and n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 31 August 2012.

⁵³ Rebholz includes "The Time that Mirth Did Steer my Ship" within a set poems attributed to Wyatt in the sixteenth-century, but notes that Harrier excludes it. See "Notes for Pages 125-128," 406. The poem may not have definitive attribution to Wyatt, despite modern editors commonly including the poem. Look for discussion of definitive Wyatt texts in Jason Powell, *The Complete Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder*, 2 Vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, forthcoming). My comparison between Wyatt's Paraphrase and "The Time that Mirth Did Steer my Ship" contributes an understanding of gender, the body, and textuality in sixteenth-century poetry. If the poem in question is not composed by Wyatt, however, we would not have proof that he wrote a critique of women's role in English poetry.

Bathsheba is implicated in the corruptive image or the printed object. In both instances, intimate contact with the female body is referenced in the language of textual production, which is mapped onto value-laden architectures of embodied and gendered experience.

Let us reconsider the figure of Bathsheba (*the female principle, the thing, the figure, the form*), who prompted David's moral and spiritual collapse in the prologue of the *Paraphrase*, but quickly became a narrative silence. The alignment of Bathsheba with the rhetoric of printing corresponds to Wendy Wall's argument that the "cultural expressions of [the problem of the publication] relied on women as *tropes*."⁵⁴ Bathsheba's "form" was a segue to the more salient focus on discourses of conscience, penitence, confession, and mercy. Interestingly, these discourses, which in the medieval period had female and male indexes, were in Wyatt's *Paraphrase* markedly focused on the male body. In Wyatt's writings, the male speaker becomes more forcefully associated with texts and textuality (indeed, represented by King David who was widely considered a poet) even while that speaker is strategically disassociated from images.⁵⁵ Wyatt's *Paraphrase* was part of a larger cultural movement that erased

⁵⁴ Wall, *The Imprint of Gender*, 7; emphasis in original.

⁵⁵ The figure of King David was also a quite likely a reference to Henry VIII, whose marriage to Catherine of Aragon (or even his relationship to Anne

medieval imagery of female bodies.⁵⁶ Wyatt's *Paraphrase* elided imageries (such as the arguably more gender-inclusive imageries of late medieval devotional literatures), and initiated an English humanist imaginary, centered on a penitent who is vibrantly embodied as a physically suffering patriarch.

Boleyn) became analogous to David's narrative. A decorated, illuminated psalter in the British Library (MS 2 A xvi), commissioned by Henry, is a Vulgate translation (1540) in which French scribe and illuminator Jean Mallard depicts Henry VIII as King David. The manuscript, which showcases Henry VIII's own annotations to the text of the psalms, features images such as Henry-as-David fighting Goliath, Henry-as-David in a penitent posture before the angel of God, Henry playing the harp in his palace, and Henry reading sacred books in his privy chamber. The paradoxical transition of forms between medieval and post-Reformation culture is also evident in Henry's psalter.

⁵⁶ The anti-feminist implications of iconoclasm are made clear by Sarah Stanbury, who writes that "the (Protestant) rhetoric of violence against images [. . .] became inseparable from a rhetoric of violence against women, a collapsed semiotic that yoked adoration of women with adoration of seductive and feminized images, and punished both" (*The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007), 43).

Reforming the Penitential Psalms: Wyatt and Embodied Conscience

Composed in the early sixteenth century,⁵⁷ Sir Thomas Wyatt's *Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms* remains the most obvious text connecting the Tudor poet to the English Reformation. Since Scripture in the vernacular was considered to be inherently reformist, scholars have used the *Paraphrase* as evidence to view Wyatt as a Protestant writer who rejected outward symbols and emphasized "inward" spiritual states.⁵⁸ Robert Twombly sees the psalms as Wyatt's progressive psychological and literary liberation from Aretino, the Catholic source text, resulting in Wyatt's creation of a "real voice" of David, fewer of Aretino's "flamboyantly sensuous images," and a more disciplined "verbal economy."⁵⁹ New Historicist treatments of the *Paraphrase*, although providing broader political contexts, ultimately agree. Considering the convergence of religious and state power in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), Stephen Greenblatt labels Wyatt the "voice of early English Protestantism."⁶⁰ Elizabeth Heale in *Wyatt, Surrey, and Early Tudor Poetry* (1998) says that Wyatt's *Paraphrase* is "distinctly Reformist" and argues the psalms follow the Crown's Ten Articles of 1536, as well as the Bishops' Book of 1537, the psalms being (for Heale) a work indicative of emerging English Protestant orthodoxy.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Rebholz notes the two disputed dates of composition of the psalm paraphrase as 1535 and 1541 but says it is speculation to say whether the

Critics who interpret the *Paraphrase* as hegemonic and characteristically Protestant, however, have focused on narrow sections of text. They isolate

paraphrase had to do with either of Wyatt's imprisonments (*Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 455). Jason Powell identifies John Brereton's scribal hand to speculate that the paraphrases may date to before the spring of 1539, the end of Wyatt's embassy to Spain ("Thomas Wyatt's Poetry in Embassy: Egerton 2711 and the Production of Literary Manuscripts Abroad," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67: 2 (2004): 261–282).

⁵⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 115.

⁵⁹ Robert G. Twombly, "Thomas Wyatt's Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms of David," *TSL* 12 (1970): 354; 357–8. See also H. A. Mason, *Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), 206–21.

⁶⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 115.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Heale, *Wyatt, Surrey, and Early Tudor Poetry* (London: Longman, 1998), 172–3. Heale provides important context by placing the *Paraphrase* against the royal Acts and state printings in 1536 and 1537, arguing that the *Paraphrase* was in "perfect conformity to the recently formulated English orthodoxy" and was a "bold but well-judged enterprise."

recognizable Protestant themes or allusions and take these as a stand-in for the rest of the *Paraphrase*. Psalm 51 and its reference to “Inward Zion, the Zion of the Ghost” is one of these oft-read sections.⁶² When regarding these sections alone, a reader can view Wyatt’s arguments within Tudor patterns. However, critics have not paid as much attention to other parts of the text that contain, notably, startling images of the human body’s appendages and wounds, language of flesh and bones, domesticated and wild animals, worms and leeches, soil and dust. The figure of David, king of the Jewish people c. 1003–970 B.C., is the body dramatically performed across the *Paraphrase*.⁶³ In Wyatt’s text, King David is described as diseased, unstable, disintegrating, wounded, penetrated, weeping, and lacking vitality. The language of David’s excessive,

⁶² LI. 504–5. See esp. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 115. See also Heale, *Wyatt, Surrey, and Early Tudor Poetry*, 167. Heale writes that Psalm 51 is “the most clearly evangelical expression of the importance of grace and the error of reliance on good works that we have had so far.”

⁶³ According to the Bible, David is both the character and king of the Jewish people in the narrative from II Samuel; this figure has also been associated across history as the writer of Psalms.

“spectacular”⁶⁴ (outward) body is the evidence that begins to undermine the worn over-reading of inwardness that critics have repeatedly seen as the *telos* of the Wyatt text.

Examining Tropes of Embodiment in Wyatt’s Paraphrase

The latent imagery of the body (virtually ignored until now) in Wyatt’s text begins to seem pervasive the more we spend time identifying it. In the *Paraphrase*, in seventy verses of the prologue alone, there are at least twenty

⁶⁴ Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), 25: “The spectacular visible body is the proper gauge of what the bourgeoisie has had to forget.” In Barker’s assessment of the emergence of capitalist notions of privacy and the body during the Enlightenment, she notes that the new economic system was based on the repression of the publicly tortured body of late medievalism. Power was no longer gauged on this visible body, and it was forgotten in order to have a more pervasive internalization of power, where people invented (and performed) a sense of a private body, in which they enacted the state and economic power in far-reaching ways. In terms of Wyatt’s text, the body is medial, both performed in a “private” space and also dramatically visceral. The criticism of Wyatt, by ignoring the interplay of private and public embodiment, has reified what Barker notes is a capitalistic schematic of value.

allusions to embodiment, including references to the “heart,” “eyes,” “breath,” “senses,” “bones,” “breast,” “face,” “limbs,” “nakedness,” “fair hoar beard,” “ruffled hair,” “hand,” “knees,” and “disease.” Perhaps the reason we have not previously seen how embodiment structures the *Paraphrase* is because, as Francis Barker contends, the body is “among those objects which have been hidden from history.”⁶⁵ In *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Elizabeth Grosz denies the dichotomy between a “‘real,’ material body [. . .] and its various cultural and historical representations.” This chapter will take seriously the contention made by Grosz and others in the field of body studies that

⁶⁵ Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body*, 12. Francis Barker explains an important distinction between reading the body as object, as opposed to the body as an indicator of a cultural process:

However necessary it may be to isolate the body for analytic purposes, the body in question is not a hypostatized object, still less a simple biological mechanism of given desires and needs acted on externally by controls and enticements, but a relation in a system of liaisons which are material, discursive, psychic, sexual, but without stop or centre. It would be better to speak of a certain “bodiliness” than of “the body.” [. . .] Rather than an extra-historical residue, inariant and mute, this body is as ready for coding and decoding, as intelligible both in its presence and its absence. Barker says the body is a multi-variate and multi-direction site for interpretation, where biological and the history meet within the coded, culturally contingent bodies of historical subjects.

“representations and cultural inscriptions quite literally constitute bodies and help to produce them as such.”⁶⁶

Critical history has obscured Wyatt’s body as a product of its methodology, but the silence was also a product of Wyatt’s own intention. In a way, the *Paraphrase* obscures the body with a story where the main character repeatedly articulates the wish to escape the flesh,⁶⁷ following the Reformed hermeneutic of spirit over body, and word over image.⁶⁸ Wyatt exalted the inner life over outward

⁶⁶ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, x.

⁶⁷ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 124. Greenblatt’s reading is a touchstone here, because he pinpoints this structuring fact of the *Paraphrase*, arguing that David’s penitent sexuality was how Wyatt enacted desire for a “spirit [. . .] secured from the vulnerability of the body.” I work from Greenblatt’s assumption that the *Paraphrase* was a performance of the fraught body, but I reach a different conclusion. I argue that the Wyatt text conspicuously failed to extract a voice separate from the body, its authenticity issuing precisely from registers of corporeal experience.

⁶⁸ Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981), 243. Regarding the original psalm text, Luther was “impressed by the way the Psalmist relied solely on God’s word and promise for salvation.”

ritual in his psalms; the speaker David confesses that he failed to internalize the Scriptures—“My bread of life, the word of truth”— and claims that he erringly “cleaved to the flesh” (LI. 555–58) The *Paraphrase* also emphasizes David’s growing understanding of Reformed penance, as he “takes all outward deed in vain” (L. 651). In Wyatt’s text, the body is performed as the speaker’s desire to have the body emptied or removed; thus, in Barker’s terms, it has been intelligible to scholars as an “absence,” i.e., scholars have taken at face value the text’s argument for transcending a troubled and fallen body. My purpose in what follows is to acknowledge how Wyatt denied the body, while showing that Wyatt also conspicuously focused on embodied motifs.

In a new assessment, moreover, I see Wyatt’s embodied motifs as part of an applied project of conscience, an evangelical project that incorporated spirit and body, and one that integrated medieval and Reformed practices. This chapter is interested in how texts functioned as a way to test beliefs against experience (a way to work through ideas and doctrines) rather than as professions of orthodoxy. As Ethan Shagan has argued, profession of belief was not the singular goal of religious experience, but was part of a wider “process of

cultural accommodation in religious belief.”⁶⁹ Devotional literature, and in particular the verse sequence, was a way for the sixteenth-century person to negotiate his or her own power (not necessarily a power to persist within the social structure, as Greenblatt argues), but, I will argue, devotional literature was a way of understanding one’s own experience in the face of changing social movements. In Shagan’s terms, the verse sequence might be a procedure, not for religious profession, but for embodying beliefs in a more gradual and intermittent process.

This chapter, therefore, will be a starting point for answering this question: How did Reformed views of conscience engage flesh and spirit? How did

⁶⁹ Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 7. See also page 6, where Shagan critiques Christopher Haigh’s reading of the Protestant Reformation:

In assuming that the confessional lens is the only lens that matters, he neatly dismisses as irrelevant to the Reformation’s “success” such fundamental transformations as the undermining of the four-century-old papal primacy, the erosion of the purgatorial scheme of salvation at the centre of medieval worship, and the almost complete destruction of the physical infrastructure of traditional religion.

Shagan indicts revisionist histories as idiosyncratic in their focus on narrow theological doctrines, whereas the schemas of popular politics in the period had broader and more radical implications.

Reformed writers understand their senses and body when “unmediated scripture”⁷⁰ and “textual abstraction” became the way of religious practice?⁷¹ Rather than embodiment disappearing in an evangelical practice, the body takes on new imageries, meanings, and forms. I believe that the body was central to the process of making sense of religious change, a process which has not yet been in great depth.

Sacred Texts and Secular Verse

The paradox of Wyatt’s *Paraphrase* comes from the fact that psalm paraphrases were derived from sacred texts. Paraphrase was dependent on the author’s close knowledge of Scripture and intention to activate the meanings of the original text. Yet, versifying (which often meant writers expanded and differentiated the text) complicated how the texts worked as a site of religious expression. In Wyatt’s case especially, the *Paraphrase* acted as interplay between sacred and amatory modes of Renaissance poetry. As Rebholz notes,

⁷⁰ See David Daniell’s account of William Tyndale’s *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, in *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1994), 225.

⁷¹ For more on textual abstraction see Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007).

by translating into *terza rima* rhyme scheme, and by interpolating the literary form from Pietro Aretino, Wyatt reworked the late medieval signifiers of humanist and courtly contexts.⁷² Hallett Smith also points out how the crossover creates a view of the flesh that intermixed courtly and theological objectives. “The Psalms are therefore romantic,” Smith writes; “they form a series of complaints, not so much for sin in general as for the traps and trammels of the flesh from a courtly point of view.”⁷³ Stephen Foley agrees, claiming that Aretino (and Wyatt) “alienated the penitential psalms from what might have been an artificially pure theological context.”⁷⁴ “[This translation] exposes faith as a language,” Foley writes, “rather than as an unmediated form of truth.”⁷⁵ Foley, Smith, and Rebholz have noted

⁷² See Rebholz, *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 452–489, for comprehensive glosses on the *Paraphrase*, including notes on the source texts, such as Aretino, Campensis, Zwingli, the Coverdale Bible, the Vulgate, and Tyndale.

⁷³ Smith, “English Metrical Psalms,” 262.

⁷⁴ “Wyatt’s use of Aretino’s frame inscribes the psalms from inside the alien discourse of Petrarchan erotic narrative,” Foley writes, “and demonstrates that the language of faith too is embedded in an impure social process.” I agree that rendering theological questions through amatory tropes created new ways of living out the texts. See Foley, *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 91.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

the way that Wyatt's text (in following Aretino) violated the boundaries between courtly and sacred genres.

But in a broader reading, I argue that Wyatt's psalms are not only crossing generic categories. The question was not just aesthetic. Wyatt's project, in my view, engaged epistemic problems (an applied project of sixteenth-century conscience). Not only does programmatic change produce ambivalence and equivocation on the part of its members; it requires ambivalence as a mode of working through new, unprecedented decisions. I argue that Wyatt and other reformers explored (rather than professed) reform ideas through the dilation of sacred text. While others have observed that he was manipulating generic modes to speak to artistic traditions, moreover, I see these genres as tools Wyatt used to pursue and combine broader questions about embodiment, sacred text, and conscience.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ This is not entirely unlike the way English Departments draft new curricula in the digital age. New English-major requirements or curricula for revised English survey courses are not derived from a set of established beliefs about what should be taught in the present day. It's more like hazarding an educated guess, testing the best prior knowledge against a new context. The commonplaces of an English Department (like the commonplaces of emergent

In Wyatt's *Paraphrase*, metaphors from the Vulgate become unbound into extended analogies of the body. One reference from Psalm 6 was translated in the Coverdale Bible: "Heale me for al my bones are vexed." In the Wyatt text, this becomes a much longer trope of physical sickness, occurring in multiple locations across over 100 lines of the *Paraphrase*.⁷⁷ The psalmist's spiritual state is superimposed onto his bones, when addressing his "Lord." The psalmist says, "I [. . .] feel all my limbs that have rebelled for fear / Shake." (LI. 98–9). The subtext of the word "rebelled" is David's moral rebellion against the social order and sacred law; however, the more direct function of the word "rebelled" is to create an image of David's trembling appendages—his "limbs"—acting out and betraying him. "See how my soul," Wyatt paraphrases from the Vulgate reference later in Psalm 6, "doth fret it to the bones" (line 122). David's affliction originated

Protestantism) are discovered through a strategic process of trial and error, a process of consensus-building that requires provisional decisions and beliefs.

⁷⁷ See Kenneth Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1963), 255–259. "Wyatt's paraphrases, particularly of the first two Psalms, are much longer than the biblical versions; but, generally speaking, he amplifies the original by the introduction of phrases from the Bible or its commentators" (258). See also Patricia Thomson, *Thomas Wyatt: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1974), 107–108.

in his adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah, but the *Paraphrase* describes a pain that takes shape in the body and threatens continual languishing.⁷⁸

Wyatt's use of Aretino's verse prologues in his *Paraphrase* was a way to insert physical suffering into the narrative of David's sin, which is mentioned in the psalm but not in the biblical narrative. In 2 Samuel, David was not struck with illness, but, instead, it is his son who dies: "The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became very ill" (2 Samuel 12:16). David fasts and pleads with God for his child but is not himself diseased. The narrative of Samuel shows that God's displeasure with David was displaced onto his progeny (2 Samuel 12:15–23). But in the *Paraphrase*, David undergoes the physical illness as a consequence of the sin, and the child with Bathsheba is never mentioned.

In the sixteenth century, paraphrases were not a strict translation and often expanded sacred text, creating content that outgrew the bounds of the

⁷⁸ The context involves the corporeal self at odds with the soul. Indeed, the unreliability of the body is a repeated theme in Wyatt's poems, related to emerging ideas of evangelical conscience, where the penitent subject is "disturbed, is afraid, is timid, trembles, or quakes, or is desperate." Lohse, "Conscience and Authority," 162.

original text.⁷⁹ Miles Coverdale conformed his psalm lengths to the lengths of the originals, so if the Vulgate psalm was 11 lines long, so was Coverdale's. This leaves little room to add to the Scriptures.⁸⁰ In contrast, Wyatt's Psalm 6 alone

⁷⁹ During the Renaissance, preachers and theologians translated psalms into the vernacular, but metrical paraphrases also began to be created by Renaissance poets. Renaissance writers knew that the original Hebrew text was poetry, as Sidney says in the *Defence of Poesie*: the Psalms are "fully written in metre, as all learned hebricians agree, though the rules be not yet fully found." Wyatt creates his psalm paraphrase in *terza rima*, which confirms that he thought of the psalms as poetry. *Terza rima* is an Italian metrical innovation with three-line rhyme patterns: aba, bab, cc, according to Hallett Smith, "English Metrical Psalms in the Sixteenth Century and their Literary Significance," *HLQ* 9: 1/4 (1945/1946): 249. Israel Baroway, "Towards Understanding Tudor-Jacobean Hebrew Studies," *Jewish Social Studies*, 18 (1956): 3–24, stresses how the Henrician period and slightly after, 1540–68, is a "developmental period" in the study of Hebrew (12).

⁸⁰ See A. G. Dickens *The English Reformation*. 2nd ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1989), 21: "From 1526 onward the translations by Tyndale, Coverdale and others gave the English a vernacular bible with Lutheran commentaries making a resonant impact at all levels of English society, not

goes on for 180 lines.⁸¹ In terms of word count, the Latin Psalm 6 is around 166 words; Wyatt's is over 1,300 words. Concepts of sin and suffering from the Old Testament could be leveraged, therefore, to cultivate doctrines with more detailed epistemologies.⁸²

solely upon the learned." For contemporary English comparison text of the Psalms, see *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Revised Standard Version (New York: Oxford UP, 1994).

⁸¹ Campensis augmented psalm content "by more than 50 percent," by Twombly's calculation, and Wyatt is much more verbose than Campensis. Twombly, "Thomas Wyatt's Paraphrase," 361.

⁸² See Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 112. Though he only briefly deals with Sir Thomas Wyatt, who (in Hamlin's estimation) has less influence than later psalmists, Hamlin does point out that Wyatt "initiate(s) the subsequent practice of poetic psalm paraphrase from Sidney to Milton" and introduces *terza rima* to English verse through the psalms. See also Whigham and Rebhorn, eds., *The Art of English Poesy*, 174. It is possible that *terza rima* is what Puttenham calls "the rhyme in the third distance."

Contexts of the Penitential Psalms in the Sixteenth Century

Wyatt's *Paraphrase* participated in the religious changes of the sixteenth century by revising Catholic genres and conventions. The penitential psalms (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143, in the Protestant numbering) were an important part of devotional manuscripts and printed books up through the 1530s.⁸³ In Roman Catholic traditions, the seven psalms were often included within larger collections of texts and images.⁸⁴ As Eamon Duffy explains, the content available in such books was wide-ranging.

They were [. . .] crammed [. . .] with non-biblical material—suffrages to and images of the saints, litanies, indulgence prayers to the wounds of Jesus, to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Virgin Mary. The core of the book, the Little Office of the Virgin, with its constant refrain of “Ave Maria Gratia Plena,” the greeting of the Angel Gabriel, and its hymns and lessons returning again and again to the

⁸³ See Robert G. Twombly, “Thomas Wyatt’s *Paraphrase*,” 348. Twombly writes that the psalms were printed frequently, indicating a “wide use among the laity.” They would be printed “as a group [. . .] in Vulgate Latin [. . .] in devotional handbooks missals, *Horae* primers, and so on.”

⁸⁴ Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 5, 55. Duffy argues that Catholic devotional books allowed for a more actualized expression of faith on the part of women and lay people. Devotional books were a “physical embodiment of a remarkable medieval laicisation of clerical forms of prayer” and an aspect of “lay interiority, the personalizing of religion.”

moment at which God took human flesh in the womb of the Virgin at the Annunciation.⁸⁵

As shown in Duffy's listing, the range of contents had implications for embodiment (evident in the focus on the incarnation, the prayers to wounds, and the centering on the Virgin Mary).⁸⁶ Wyatt wrote within (*and against*) this book tradition.

Wounds in Sixteenth-Century Books of Hours

In the *Paraphrase*, Wyatt's imagery of the "raging" "wound" appeared to appropriate medieval imagery, converting the focus from the wounded body of Christ to the wounded body of the penitent. Books of Hours were the initial

⁸⁵ Ibid., 68.

⁸⁶ Prayers of healing such as this one—even in late medieval religion—were understood as "between magic spell and petitionary prayer" and were often censured by bishops as superstitious. Nevertheless, according to Duffy, such promises of healing were popular. By accessing the text of the prayer and the accompanying image, the reader could expect boons and physical benefits; one such text is titled "Prayers for Fever through the thousand names of the Lord" (91, 93). As well as specific types of illness, the prayers were often listed with a rubric of benefits, such as relief from "a difficult childbirth, a bad diarrhoea, storms at sea, the dangers of battle, good impression at court, a bodily flux" (106).

framework in which the penitential psalms appeared, and these books contained literal images of wounds, as well as prayers to wounds. One popular image was the wound of Jesus, which was addressed in prayers and also depicted in diamond-shaped or oblong illustrations or illuminations.⁸⁷ Christ's body was also particularized in addresses to his bones. In the popular prayer "O Bone Jesu," Christ's blood is salvific: "O benign Jesu, I beseech you by that precious blood which you designed to pour out for us sinners on the altar of the cross, that you will cast away from you all my iniquities."⁸⁸ Praying to the fragmented body parts of Christ was meant to enact literal healing, as well as spiritual cleansing. Late medieval books also portrayed Christ's suffering body in the passion, often depicted as singular parts.

It is notable that the *Paraphrase* focused instead on the wound of King David, the Old Testament patriarch. In Psalm 32, the speaker describes himself as being like a person hiding a wound from the physician and thus increasing in suffering. This trope of the wound is the core of Wyatt's *Paraphrase*; the descriptors and the prosody around this trope indicate the great energy focused in the image. Wyatt writes:

As he that feels his health to be hindered
By secret wound, concealed from the charm

⁸⁷ Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 72.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

Of leech's cure, that else had had redress—
And feel my bones consume and wax unfirm
By daily rage roaring in excess (LI. 241–4).

The speaker's comparison moves from a third person analogy ("As *he* that feels *his* health to be hindered / By secret wound") to the first person: "And feel *my* bones consume" (LI. 240–1; 243, emphasis mine). The analogy culminates in the idea of the speaker's enraged and roaring "wound": a spiritual metaphor and, at the same time, a visualization of a physical, literal infection. Wyatt's description of the wound is active, associated with dynamic verbs: bones are "consumed" and "waxed" by the wound; the injury "roars," a contrast to David's stasis, his paralyzed spiritual posture (LI. 243–4).

Assigning the word "rage" to the wound, moreover, indicates the violent sentence at the heart of the narrative: the jealous desire that motivated David's sexual aggression and murder, the actions that now perpetuate his spiritual and social quarantine. A single aspect of David's imagined body (the raging wound), like his singular adulterous and murderous actions, threatened the life of the whole body, and, ultimately, the body politic: the Jewish kingdom. Wyatt's descriptions of rage are arguably part of an emerging English literary sense, moreover.

In Psalm 143, rage is again connected to David's retreat into hiding: "For that in harns [hiding places] to flee his rage so rife." Wyatt repeatedly returned to

the word “rage” in other songs and poems (LXXXIV, 1).⁸⁹ At the end of Wyatt’s satire “My Mother’s Maids,” “rage” is linked to moral error, “When the rage doth lead them from the right” (CL, 107). Wyatt’s poems also use the word to question uncontrolled and dangerous sentience inside the political subject: “What rage is this?” (CXVII, 1). When comparing the use of rage across the poems, it is clear that in the lyric poems rage is a more abstracted term, but with similar implications for the social order. The *Paraphrase* develops rage as an imagined site of the body (the “raging” “wound,” which seems to link to medieval precedent.

The psalms develop a wider register of emotional language where parts of the body overlay with emotional states. “Love” and “hope” are given by God’s “hand”; the experience of joy prompts the resurrection of bones (“Then shall for joy upspring / The bones that were afore consumed to dust”), and the feeling of sorrow is expressed by weeping allegorized as bleeding: “As he that bleeds in

⁸⁹ Wyatt’s poem “So Feeble is the Thread” seems to present a biographical reference to rage, since it refers to Wyatt’s travels as a diplomat (marked as being “In Spain”) and to the danger of his relationship to Henrician power: “The rage that oft did make me err by furor undiscreet.” In other of the verses, rage is cast as the uncontrolled greed of Renaissance empire-building (“Flee from the rage of cruel will”).

vain” (LI. 681–2, 475–6, 407).⁹⁰ Certainly, the references to bones, tears, dust, and blood follow from traditional psalm terminology, but Wyatt’s poem extends the original text for a more dramatic performance of how body, emotion, and spirit collide with other in the negotiation of David’s very subjectivity.

The character of David became in Wyatt’s text a way to draw attention to the intensities of spiritual suffering. Rather than a medieval reading body that anticipated literal healing, the reading body for Wyatt’s text was meant to engage emotionally and psychologically with the *sense* of the wounded body: its inner qualities, its processes, and its feeling. An isolating and difficult affect, rage appears at times to be a reaction to the social order within the powerless subject; at times, rage is a moral fault causing suffering on the part the penitent. Wyatt’s text, however, is paradoxical in that it relies on embodied experience as a way to

⁹⁰ My emphasis on the body is in contrast to Greenblatt, who sees Wyatt’s psalms as primarily an expression of “soul sickness” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 176). Greenblatt’s ideological basis is crystallized, when he invokes “the state of both medical science and personal hygiene in the sixteenth century,” but states that the phenomenology of the body must be relegated below social constructs, as authors are “far more powerfully influenced by cultural forces, above all by their experience of power” (278).

relay emotional information about rage. These affects are inherently embodied in the verses.

Wyatt's *Paraphrase* is potentially a correlate to (and a break from) late medieval devotional books. If this text breaks from earlier book traditions, however, it shows continuity with native English reform traditions, such as Lollard devotional poems about the "Prick of Conscience." Wyatt's sequence thus is a medial form, synthesizing previous formats.

The Worm of Conscience in Wyatt's Paraphrase

In the opening prologue, when Nathan discloses he knew the king's secret, the revelation immediately prompts David's body to drop in temperature and his face to change color: "The heat doth straight forsake the limbs cold, The colour eke droppeth down from his cheer" (LI. 42–3). Later in the prologue, David's anguished state is described as "fraughted with disease / Of stormy sights, his cheer coloured like clay" (LI. 68–9). David's suffering is emphatically linked to Renaissance language of illness, with God cast as a force against the decline of vitality: "Oh Lord, of all my health alone" (line 369).

In the *Paraphrase*, the speaker's references to intestinal parasites and blood-letting leeches begins in the first psalm, when the speaker tells God he is sick without a remedy: "For of the whole the leech taketh no cure" (line 95). The "secret," "concealed" aspect of David's wound keeps him from the disciplining and healing power of the Creator (line 240). David's behavior isolates the

“wound” from the “charm” of the “leeches cure” (LI. 241–2). The image of physical illness culminates early in the *Paraphrase*, moreover, when the speaker invites the Creator (*or was it written as a command?*) to act as a bleeding worm. “Be

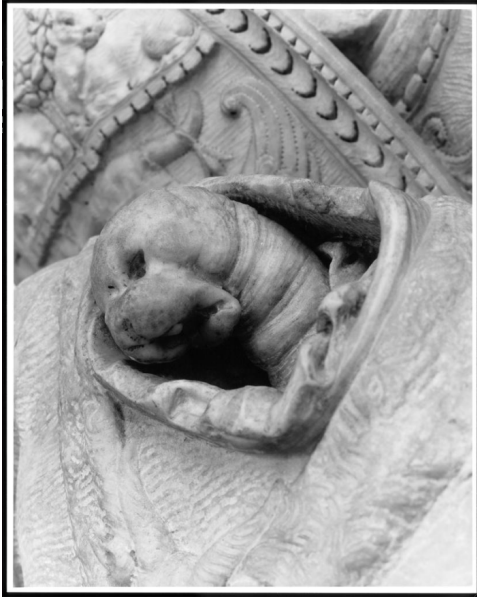


Figure 2: Detail from sculpture in the Medici chapel Chapel, Florence early 16th c. Photo by Silvo Costini.

thou the leech,” the speaker says (L.118). The speaker’s request for God to drain the fever from the body acts as a disquieting moment, iconoclastic, and even irreverent.⁹¹

The oppositional image to the healing leech is the devouring and infecting worm. “My pride by grudging of the worm within [. . .]

mine entrails [. . .] infect with fervent sore.”

(LI. 351–3).⁹² David’s pride is located inside

the body, in the gut, with the sin itself depicted as an intestinal parasite, or an invasive alien body occupying inside the subject (L. 353). The “worm,” placed

⁹¹ Rebholz, *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 459. Rebholz says this reference to the leech is an addition by Wyatt, “inspired by Campensis and John Fisher.” See John Fisher, *This treatyse concernynge the fruytfull saynges of Dauyd the kynge [and] prophete in the seuen penytencyall psalms*, 1508. See too Dickens on Fisher’s eventual martyrdom, *The English Reformation*, 30.

⁹² Rebholz, 469.

with both the idea of the “fever” and the idea of the “sore,” is a stacking of conceits that do not seem, in the end, to act at the level of symbol alone. That is, the body is felt here. Moreover, the embodied metaphor of the “worm of conscience” was a prevalent metaphor of late medieval devotional literature.⁹³ Indeed, the gloss in the *OED* of “worm” as “conscience” encapsulates the way this trope *embodies* a spiritual concept. “A grief or passion that preys stealthily on a man’s heart or torments his conscience,” the *OED* explains, “(*like a worm in a dead body or a maggot in food*); esp. the gnawing pain of remorse” (emphasis mine).⁹⁴

⁹³ Rebholz notes that “worm” here means conscience, but his glossing of the worm with its spiritual connotation could limit other possible interpretations, such as those pertaining to sixteenth-century knowledge of worms and disease. In the sixteenth century, worm referred to a maggot, grub, or parasite that caused disease. See also the *OED*, “worm,” 4; 5a; 6a. “The larva of an insect; a maggot, grub, or caterpillar, esp. one that feeds on and destroys flesh, fruit, leaves, cereals, textile fabrics, and the like.”

⁹⁴ *OED*, “worm, or cankerworm,” 11a. As qtd. in the *OED*, the phrase is used in “1597 Shakespeare *Richard III* i. iii. 219: “The worme of conscience still begnaw thy soule.”

Importantly, the worm of conscience was not an innovation by Wyatt. Rather, he was deploying a native English trope that had been in existence from as early as the fourteenth century. The devotional verse *The Pricke of Conscience* is a 10,000-line poem formerly ascribed to Richard Rolle of Hampole, but now ascribed to an anonymous Lollard author.⁹⁵ The poem explicitly included the “worm of conscience,” repeating as well the words “gnaw”

⁹⁵ Richard Rolle, *The Pricke of Conscience (Stimulus Conscientiae): A Northumbrian Poem*, ed. Richard Morris (Berlin: A. Asher, 1863). For a searchable version (transcribed from Morris’s edition) see the University of Oxford Text Archive via <<http://www.ota.ox.ac.uk/headers/0010.xml>>. Morris transcribed from the Cottonian MS in the British Library, but according to Derek Pearsall, the attribution to Richard Rolle (d. 1349) was an error of attribution that was an attempt to disassociate the poem from its Lollard origins. See Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry in The Routledge History of English Poetry* Vol. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 139. With regard to the occurrence of *The Pricke of Conscience* in the Vernon manuscript, see N. F. Blake, “Vernon Manuscript: Contents and Organization” in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990), 45–59. See also Brian Cummings, “Conscience and the Law in Thomas More,” in *The Renaissance Conscience*, ed. Harald E. Braun and Edward Vallance (29–51).

and “stir” in connection with the way the subject would sense the presence of this worm.

Ryght now we degged and passed oway
Now er we in helle and swa sale be ay,
Yan sale yai know how ille yai half lyfed,
When ye worme conscience yam has greved,
Yat with-in sale yam ay gnaw and byte
Ffor yai in vanyté had here delyte,
And for-yi yat conscience styrd yam noght,
To forsake yair folyes yat yai wrought,
Bot followed ay here yair flesschly wille;
Yarfour it es gud, right, and skylle,
Yat ye worme of conscience with-in,
Ever-mare in helle yam gnaw for yair syn.
(LI. 7085–96)⁹⁶

In the poem, “ye worme conscience” illustrates a basic scheme of moral law. Whether the penitent experienced hell or salvation was determined by whether the subject “followed” the will of the “flessch” or whether the subject would “forsake” their “foils” by listening to the “stirring” of conscience. The stirring of conscience was described as a “worm” inside; this experience of the worm had its correlate in the eternal “gnawing” of hell. Wyatt clearly relayed this tradition into Reformation poetry. Why did he do so? How was Wyatt’s different than medieval uses such as in *The Pricke of Conscience*?⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Rolle, *The Pricke of Conscience*, ed. Morris.

⁹⁷ Killis Campbell, “A Neglected Manuscript of *The Prick of Conscience*,” *Modern Language Notes* 20.7 (Nov. 1905): 210–211. Campbell describes the

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to define Wyatt's precise relationship to the medieval precedents of the worm of conscience. But Wyatt was clearly drawing on anti-idealist vernacular traditions that emphasized the subject's personal will and salvation. If indeed the poem is derived from Lollard ideology, the trope may signal a lay piety that rejected ritual confession in the Roman Church. It is also interesting that this worm of conscience was expressed in both native medieval and continental tropes. Finally, we can observe an array of texts are being networked together by Wyatt in order to address ideas about conscience and penitence.

I stated earlier that Wyatt's was an applied project of conscience, as an alternative to defining the project as a set of doctrines or beliefs about conscience. A variety of influences, formats, and precedents are being thought through at once to fashion (and maybe even to explore) a complete sense of conscience.

Further study might also posit to what extent Wyatt's project relates to the treatises on conscience written by Luther and Calvin. As Bernard Lohse explains,

Bodleian manuscript Rawl. poet. 175 as having "an entire and homogeneous text of the poem" (211).

Luther “brought about modernity” by his views of conscience.⁹⁸ Protestant conscience, according to Lohse, is concerned with “man himself.”⁹⁹ Michael G. Baylor similarly claims that evangelical conscience is “affective or emotional, as well as a cognitive phenomenon.”

Since conscience is both a rational and an emotional power, its locus in human nature must be deeper and more primary than the distinction between reason and the will; it lies at the core or heart of the personal and its emotional manifestations, especially, decisively shape the affective context of the entire life of the individual.¹⁰⁰

As indicated by Baylor, the conscience was not only the domain of the inner life; instead, the whole self was engaged. This “affective context,” where the heart and core of emotion are activated, seems to suggest an embodied (or felt) procedure. It could be argued that body, mind, and heart (even in their fallen state) helped the sixteenth-century evangelical to focus spiritual energies, and thus to leverage social and moral power.

⁹⁸ Bernhard Lohse, “Conscience and Authority in Luther,” in *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era: Papers for the Fourth International Congress for Luther Research*, ed. Heiko Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 158.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁰⁰ Michael G. Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 209–10.

Anti-Courtly Tropes and the English Protestant Body

Lucks, my fair falcon, and your fellows all,
 How well pleasant it were your liberty!
Ye not forsake me that fair might ye befall.
But they that sometime liked my company:
Like lice away from dead bodies they crawl.
Lo what a proof in light adversity!
But ye my birds, I swear by all your bells,
Ye be my friends, and so be but few else.
 ("Lucks, My Fair Falcon" LXVIII)

The epigram "Lucks, My Fair Falcon" demonstrates how embodied references function to underscore Wyatt's moral axioms.¹⁰¹ Rhetorically addressed to the speaker's falcon, the poem is a complaint against those who were companions of the speaker but are now departed, "Like lice [crawling] away from dead bodies" (LXVIII, 1; 4–5). Although the object of critique is ambiguous (did the speaker refer to courtly amours, or to false political allies?), the mental image is unmistakable. The ostracized self is an animal corpse, distasteful even to wretched parasites, which fed off the body in its vitality, but crawled away from

¹⁰¹ Wyatt's use of the epigram relates to definitions by T. K. Whipple in *Martial and the English Epigram from Sir Thomas Wyatt to Ben Jonson* (New York: Phaeton Press, 1970: 282–3. Whipple writes: "Almost all epigrams fall into two parts, the preliminary exposition and the conclusion. The former must not only give the occasion of the epigram and convey the necessary information, but almost must set the tone so the point shall not fail of its effect."

the body in its decaying state. The abject self in the poem is mirrored by the abjection of his enemies. Although alive, the enemies are depicted as lower life forms. In Wyatt's epigram, they became as minute as lice, a conceptual shrinking of the human group. Wyatt's description of the lice as moving outwards, moreover, is a dramatic spatial refashioning, related to what contemporary body studies calls *psychaesthesia*, "or "the lure posed by space for the subject's identity." Elizabeth Grosz writes,

For the subject to take up a position as a subject, it must be able to be situated in the space occupied by its body. This anchoring of the subjectivity in its body is the condition of coherent identity and, moreover, the condition under which the subject *has a perspective* on the world, and becomes a source for vision. ...In certain cases of psychosis, this coincidence or meshing of the subject and the body fails to occur.¹⁰²

Grosz demonstrates how political or psychological pressure can alter the subject's sense of embodied space. The minute lice moving away from the dead hosts are a strange negotiation of space indeed. What lure did this increasing and cadaverous space have? How was the writer anchoring the self? This loathsome image, which pierces into the darker regions of the Renaissance body, is a macabre subjectivity shown at odds with the social order. The lure came from

¹⁰² Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 47.

the power to imagine the self outside of animated life.¹⁰³ Indeed, Wyatt's identification with the corpse enacts the pathological experience of the subject in the intensely dangerous social conditions of early modern England, where the body's boundaries are continually impinged upon by the will of the state.

Jason Powell has argued that the political machinations of sixteenth-century diplomacy caused "severe discontent" on the part of diplomats like Wyatt.¹⁰⁴ I suggest that Wyatt's troubled perspective indicates that the subject can no longer create a coherent image of his own body in relation to his

¹⁰³ The reference to lice likely comes from one of Plutarch's essays, "How to Distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend: "Lice leave a dying person and abandon his body when the blood which nourishes them dries up, and the chances of seeing flatterers involved in business which has no sap or warmth are minimal, but they cling to reputation and authority and they flourish there—until things change, when they waste no time in slithering away" (from *Plutarch: Essays*, trans. Robin Waterfield (London: Penguin, 1992), 62).

¹⁰⁴ Powell, "For Caesar's I Am": Henrician Diplomacy and Representations of King and Country in Thomas Wyatt's Poetry." *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 36, No. 2 (2005): 415–431, p. 24.

supposed allies.¹⁰⁵ James Simpson similarly aligns the social exchange of court life with the fashioning of spirituality, where martyrdom is the only imagined space that promises integration. Simpson writes that, “like the Henrician courtier, the evangelical sinner could find immense relief only in submission to the punishing rod of the Law. Thus evangelicals and Henrician courtiers both found consolation through abjection.”¹⁰⁶ Simpson’s reading relates to the more negatively charged desires of political experiences at court, similar to how the imagery of the “lice” and the “dead body” work in Wyatt’s poem.

But the secondary lure of the epigram, if by lure we mean a more positively charged desire, can be fully recognized if we consider the falcon. The formal structure—the address to the falcon at the beginning—contrasts the utter failure of human relationships with the idealized working relationship between the

¹⁰⁵ See Jason Powell, “Thomas Wyatt’s Poetry in Embassy: Egerton 2711 and the Production of Literary Manuscripts Abroad,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 67.2 (2004): 261–282; Powell, “For Caesar’s I Am.”

¹⁰⁶ James Simpson, *Burning to Read*, 154. Simpson links the psalms to this abjection through the case of Surrey, who, he writes, “composed searing psalm paraphrases in prison, while awaiting execution. [. . .] We see in these texts the same homology between the predicament of the evangelical reader and that of the Henrician courtier.”

falconer and his hunting bird. The implied movement of the falcon away from and return back to the falconer signals another kind of space, one that contrasts the negatively charged space between the lice and corpse (LXVIII, 1–2). Wyatt's speaker compliments the falcon, saying the bird is "fair" and "well pleasant." Represented within the ritual sport of falconry, the movement of the bird creates a space where the speaker can fashion a sense of safety from harm, and a sense of stability and self-possession.

I include Wyatt's epigrammatic treatment of lice, finally, to help explicate the way that the phrase "be thou the leech" works as a literary device in the *Paraphrase*. Both the leech and the lice are dramatic attempts to localize interrelationships by imagining a natural parasite. While the lice are unequivocally a critique of social relations, the leech is a more complex rendering. The reference to God as the healing leech is useful in that it insinuates the diffuse and penetrable boundaries between the natural object and the subject, marking the exchange of bodily fluids, as the speaker orders the leech to attach to the skin and penetrate the body, and thus the Creator to become enmeshed with the body.

By particularizing God as a conspicuously lower life form, however, the image of the leech also works against transcendence. In the *Paraphrase*, visceral images of fever and wounds have their symbiotic match in the language of a Creator, who is also represented as a graphic, embodied aspect of creation. The

conceit of the leech is a cantilever, a tension building from increasing pressures of irony, which is to be released, not by the text itself, but by the reader's response to that latent hermeneutical energy. Thus, the analogies between the soul and body always work—indeed hinge—on reading in both directions, creating an ethos that was earth-bound in an attempt to transcend the body entirely.

Wyatt's descriptions of the body transgress the body/spirit dualities that have traditionally been ascribed to him. These multi-direction significations are relevant to Wyatt's secular verses as well. One of the epistolary satires contrasts the "outward things" most use to judge status rather than "what doth inward resort;" another song distinguishes between what the speaker cannot give — "brooches nor rings"—and what he can: "uncounterfeit [. . .] whole [. . .] heart." (CXLIX, 12–13; CI, 7–24). In a ballad, Wyatt disparages political greed as "the foul yoke of sensual bondage" (LXXXIV, 3). However, Wyatt's rhetoric does not reify an inward/outward dichotomy straightforwardly. Through Wyatt's ring and brooches, we comprehend the inwardness of the heart, and through his idea of the yoke we grasp that there is such a thing as freedom from sensuality. That is, the material references ground our understanding of conceptual abstractions, or, as Renaissance writers probably considered them, materializations of spiritual principles or entities.

Conclusion

Wyatt does not appear to be a poet writing *about* human embodiment. Rather, his dozens of references to inner states and critiques of courtly performance, his insistence on the inferiority of animals, and his diatribes against the “flesh”: all these critiques of sensuous, material items appear to reflect the onset of Protestant reform by satirizing the outward and privileging the inward. I have argued in this chapter, however, that Wyatt’s verses had a multivalent effect. He conveys explicit anti-materialism at the same time that his rhetoric resonates because of how it is grounded in descriptions of material experience. Wyatt’s text drew the contemporary reader’s attention to the bodily in a way that authenticated the reading and gave it tonality.

Those anti-idealist portrayals of courtiers and animal images are not just destroying medieval tropes of embodiment. Rather, they are forming a new embodiment increasingly focused on textuality, and increasingly hostile (at least on the surface) to images and unadulterated sensuousness. Wyatt’s reform of embodiment facilitates a powerful rendering of materiality, not an escape from materiality. It is clear, moreover, that evangelical poets were explicitly trying to say something about the body, as well as the soul.

As I have stated in this chapter, and as I will further develop in the following chapter, part of this early Reformation embodiment was an emphatic exaltation of a masculine textual embodiment. These impulses were also felt in

Tudor policies and in the social order. While it is not the sole subject of this essay, it is arguable that the piety inclusive of female imageries of the late medieval period was under duress across the Tudor period. In a 1543 act of Henry VIII (repealed in 1547), women were banned from reading Scripture in translation. As Hull states, “This act, ‘for the advancement of true religion,’ forbade the reading of an English Bible by women, artificers, prentices, journeymen, serving-men of the rank of yeomen or under, husbandmen, and laborers.”¹⁰⁷ In the case of Anne Vaughan Lock (whose writings are the subject of the next chapter), these emerging restrictions on women’s reading of Scripture must have seemed a profound burden, and their repeal an immense relief. Vaughan came from a family that invested in her education; her mother, as well, was a gospeller.¹⁰⁸ Thus, we can see that in Wyatt’s context and then in Vaughan Lock’s (somewhat overlapping) context, the role of women in a patriarchal

¹⁰⁷ Hull, *Chaste, Silent, Obedient*, xii.

¹⁰⁸ “gospeller, n.”. 5. a. “One who professes the faith of the gospel [. . .] in 16–17th c. often applied derisively to Protestants, Puritans, and sectaries. †Also, one learned in the Scriptures.” *OED Online*. September 2012. (Oxford University Press. 12 Sept. 2012). See Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

religious structure was contested, especially if we observe that this patriarchy was being strategically reinforced.

In this chapter, I have argued that Wyatt's references to embodiment were sites for cognitive work, where emerging beliefs could be tested. The verse sequence, as a site of power, allowed for a variety of beliefs to be articulated and contextualized by references to the body. Now, we will ask how the verse sequence worked for a woman writer in the Renaissance. If the evangelical patriarchy was a network of economic, geographic, and textual forces, then how did women participating within those systems write and feel? We will look deeply into the context of Calvinist nonconformity to answer these questions. Through comparison with the more conservative procedures of Henrician reform, these give us new insights into these emerging commonplaces of reform, and also the different instantiations of reform across the mid-sixteenth century.

Chapter 3:

Reforming the English Body:

Anne Vaughan Lock's Poetics (1560)

Christ wishes his mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish even all women to read the gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, and I wish that they were translated into all languages of all Christian people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and the Irish, but even by the Turks and the Saracens.

—Erasmus, *Paraclesis* (1516)

This receipte God the heavenly Physitian hath taught, his most excellent Apothecarie master John Calvine hath compounded, and I your graces most bounden and humble have put into an Englishe box, and do present unto you. [. . .] Suche remedye as here is conteined can no Philosopher, no Infidele, no Papist minister.

—Anne Vaughan Lock, *Sermons of Calvin* (1560)¹⁰⁹

In the sixteenth century, the technology of the vernacular Bible was shipped from continent to continent, between diverse ethnic and gendered bodies, where it transformed not only community practices, but also the shape of community itself. This mobilization of sacred text across cultural spaces had a variety of effects. Consider the two epigrams above. In a radical break with late

¹⁰⁹ Quotations and line numbers for Ann Vaughan Lock's sonnets, sermons, and epistolary letter are taken from Susan M. Felch, *The Collected Works of Anne Vaughan Lock*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, Vol. 185 (Tempe: Renaissance English Text Society, 1999), 5.

medieval perspectives on the Crusades, Erasmus imagined the consolidation of disparate bodies into Christian textual heritage.¹¹⁰ He expanded who should have access to the Scriptures, naming Saracens as one of those groups who should be included in a global Christian vision. As the *OED* states, Saracen was “a name for the nomadic peoples of the Syro-Arabian desert which harassed the Syrian confines of the Empire; hence, an Arab; by extension, a Muslim, esp. with reference to the Crusades.” The Ottoman Turks and the “Saracens,” or Arabic Muslims, would, as Erasmus proposed, be allowed to read the mysteries of Christ and the letters of St. Paul.¹¹¹ “Even women,” Erasmus wrote, should have access to the Scriptures in translation.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ From *Paraclesis* by Erasmus of Rotterdam, qtd. in David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994), 67.

¹¹¹ An earlier use occurs in John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (1390): “To passe over the grete See To werre and sle the Sarazin.” l. 363. “Saracen, n. and adj.”. *OED Online*.

¹¹² While critiquing women’s consumption of traditional religion, Erasmus also advocated for women to participate in humanist study. See Suzanne Hull’s *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475–1640* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), 109. Hull writes that Erasmus defending

The second epigram was written by an early Puritan activist and English devotional writer, Anne Vaughan Lock. In her prefatory letter to a translation of Jean Calvin, Vaughan Lock demonstrates not consolidation, but the fissures between evangelicals and the practices of Catholics (“papists”), and also the group she calls “infidels,” which, as the *OED* says, was a term used in the sixteenth-century for Muslims: “An adherent of a religion opposed to Christianity; esp. a Muhammadan, a Saracen.”¹¹³ In her statement, Vaughan Lock alludes to the deepest ideological chasms in early modern world and indicates that salvation was reserved for the radical evangelical body.

Finally, in both epigrams (in Erasmus by direct mention and in Vaughan Lock by implication), we learn about women’s relation to the Scriptures, which was a site of tension in this cultural network. European women participated in the emergence of a global Renaissance culture, and women’s literacy intersected in important ways with the cultural work of religious reform. Indeed, the two

reading for women, and “For those with leisure he supported the study of Latin and Greek.”

¹¹³ The *OED* also cites the *Book of Common Prayer*, which refers to the same ethnic groups as Vaughan Lock and Erasmus: “Coll. Good Friday, Haue mercy upon all Jewes, Turkes, Infidels, and heretikes” (“infidel, n. and adj.” *OED Online*). “Also (more rarely), applied to a Jew, or a pagan 1548–9.”

epigrams show the intersection of women's literacy, reform ideology, and encounters with the other. This chapter will begin to ask how women's bodies were represented in response to emerging realities of global mercantilism, colonial expansion, and Protestant ethics.

This chapter will not be able to address all of the implications (and cannot survey all of the history) of women writers within globalizing Protestantism. We will mainly assess, therefore, how Vaughan Lock's exile in Geneva inflected her writings and embodied imagery. Despite the fact that I cannot account for the wider scope of women's writing in the period, I will include a discussion of devotional writing as a site of agency within women's literacy. Vaughan Lock's role as an activist and a nonconformist make her devotional writings a compelling site for discussing women's power. In particular, I will focus on how Vaughan Lock's prefatory letter to the 1560 text negotiates embodiment, political power, and religious agency. This letter, as much as her translation of Calvin's sermons, gives us a sense of what Calvinism offered to women in terms of religious authority. It is arguable that Vaughan Lock carves some agency for herself in that letter.

But it is Vaughan Lock's sonnet sequence that gives a much more radical sense of embodiment.¹¹⁴ With five introductory sonnets and twenty-one in the paraphrase, Vaughan Lock's poems are "the earliest known sonnet sequence in English."¹¹⁵ Thus, the sequence "A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner" represents a startling emergence. The grotesque embodied imagery of the paraphrases,

¹¹⁴ Patrick Collinson, "Locke, Anne (c.1530–1590x1607)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: OUP, .2 May 2013). Via <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69054>>. Roland Greene disputes Collinson on this point. Roland Greene, "Anne Lock's Meditation: Invention Versus Dilation and the Founding of Puritan Poetics," *Form and Reform in Renaissance England: Essays in Honor of Barbara Kiefer Lewalski*, ed. Amy Boesky and Mary Thomas Crane (London: Associated University Presses, 2000), 155:

"On the face of it, Lock is not undoubtedly the author of Meditation of a Penitent Sinner, owing to what seems like a disavowal: 'I haue added this meditation folowyng vnto the ende of this boke, not as parcel of maister Caluines worke, but for that it well agreeth with the same argument, and was deliuered me by my frend with whom I knew I might be so bolde to vse & publishe it as pleased me.' This vague attribution has led some scholars to question Lock's authorship. Patrick Collinson, for instance, passes over the Meditation quickly, remarking that it is 'perhaps Knox's work.' There is, however, no reasonable evidence that John Knox was a poet.

¹¹⁵ Felch, "Introduction," *Collected Works*, liii.

moreover, gives an abject sense of the body that has been explored by feminist scholars but perhaps not fully explained.

An assessment of Vaughan Lock's writing activities as being socially empowering, moreover, does not fully account for the abjection expressed in her poetry. In her sonnet sequence, for example, Vaughan Lock expresses graphic imagery that complicates the confident ethos found in other sections of the text. The first sonnet, "This horror when my trembling soul doth hear," describes a profound fear of spiritual damnation. Framed as an expression of "the minde of penitent sinner," the preface demonstrates a mind that is a dark, troubled psyche, who believes it "deserves death," that it is "lothesome filthe," that the sinner is a "blinde wretch." I read these expressions not merely as the logical products of Calvinist rhetoric about sin and salvation. I also ask whether these expressions say something about community, geography, and social change. My argument is that the grotesque embodiments of the sequence frame more than simply an evangelism rejective of sensuous physicality. The sequence frames Vaughan Lock's complex relationship to community in tones of grief, loss, fear, and joy.

Sacred Text and Women's Writing

One way to explain how sixteenth-century women occupied authority is to contend with devotional writing. As Elaine V. Beilin writes, the Reformation, with its emphasis on individual salvation and the reading of Scripture, was in fact the single most important influence on women writers of devotional literatures, who

added to the huge volume of works bearing witness to the Reformed faith.¹¹⁶ The Bible and emerging Protestant ideology influenced women writers, but the effect of those influences (whether positive or negative) is arguable.

Susan Felch, editor of the first collected edition of Vaughan Lock's works, has emphasized the agency of her writing. "Although she was unable as a woman to hold an official position either in the state or in the church," Felch writes, "Lock betrays no sense of powerlessness but rather writes with a confident authorial hand."¹¹⁷ Felch's description accurately assesses the overall effect of Lock's text, but leaves an incomplete picture nonetheless. Margaret P. Hannay and Susanne Woods have observed that "religious writing was the most acceptable literary activity for women, particularly if they transcribed or transmitted the words of male writers."¹¹⁸ However much women signaled power by activating devotional texts, there has remained much debate about the efficacy of these writing activities.

¹¹⁶ Elaine V. Beilin, "Building the City: Women Writers of the Reformation" from *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987), xxi.

¹¹⁷ Felch, "Introduction," *Collected Works*, xxxvii.

¹¹⁸ Margaret P. Hannay and Susanne Woods, eds., "Introduction," *Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (New York: MLA, 2000), 17.

If we are looking at Vaughan Lock's sermon translations (and the sonnets she appended to these) as evidence of agency, we confront complex directions of force. As Betty S. Travitsky has written, devotional writing was vexed and compromising, since:

leaders from both (Catholics and Protestants) attempted to inculcate a relatively learned piety even in secular women. Such piety was the bedrock on which women's obligations were based or, more baldly, the basis for their continued acceptance of subordination.¹¹⁹

Can a Christian woman signal power within economic and spiritual systems where her inadequacy is a structuring element? Add to this the general framework of social change for women in the sixteenth century. Feminist scholars have seen the sixteenth century as a time that put increasing pressure on women to be contained within the domestic sphere, a time when their presence in the marketplace was systemically diminished. Is it possible that Vaughan Lock communicated how much it hurt, in the sixteenth century, to be a woman?¹²⁰ I will

¹¹⁹ Travitsky, "Introduction," *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print*, 21.

¹²⁰ John Rogers makes a similar argument about Aemelia Lanyer in "Aemilia Lanyer's 'Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum'," 11, 13: "Lanyer's Christ doesn't consent. [. . . he] resembles the poem's women, whose will exists, it often seems, only to be violated." See also Lanyer's poem, which, Rogers says, "seems largely

not assert that Vaughan Lock knew she was in pain, nor will be able to prove that pain was definitively related to her gender. I will, however, raise questions of agency and group identity, alongside pained and grotesque references in Vaughan Lock's writings. By beginning to set a network of power and affective strategies, I hope to draw new attention to potential connections between the rhetorical strategies of sixteenth-century women writers and disturbing tropes of the body that complicate the agency they wield.

Gendered Power and Exile

As well as noting the complexities of power for women in devotional contexts, I also hope to suggest new directions for seeing Vaughan Lock in relation to her travels and her exile abroad. As I said in the introduction to the chapter, Vaughan Lock signals the intersection of changing group identity, women's literacy, and religious reform. These intersections are further understood, when we consider that the proliferation of Christian Scriptures in the sixteenth century, often viewed within national European and local contexts, needs to be viewed as a global phenomenon with touchstones in the Middle East. As Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski emphasizes, "The Renaissance was an era in which group life was 're-networked'—an era in which multiple forms and

to question the assumption that female speech—indeed, any original speech—might succeed in effecting positive change."

rules of social life reorganized on a genuinely global scale.”¹²¹ To elaborate on Chapelle Wojciehowski’s claim, the exile of evangelicals from England in the mid-sixteenth century reorganized the bodies of community in ways that might have been both traumatic and healing. The “re-networking” of Vaughan Lock’s context has to mean that she had experienced a unique set of stresses and new experiences that challenged her vision of the body politic. The Anglicizing of her New Jerusalem imagery in the sonnet sequence, therefore, is an incomplete view of how Vaughan Lock must and lived and felt her community.

The impulse to synthesize English and continental (texts, languages, forms, theologies) might go deeper than gender for Vaughan Lock. Vaughan Lock’s innovation stemmed from her intent to incorporate continental forms she encountered in her education and travel and residence in Geneva. In her paraphrase of Psalm 51, Vaughan Lock activates the change found in reform movements, while integrating the diversity of her life experience. That is, the paraphrase was a striking site for repurposing, reimagining, transforming, and leveraging the inherited sacred text into a new living sense, a modality for encountering conceptual and affective difficulties, and rendering experiments of the mind. In Calvinism, as in Anne Vaughan Lock’s writings, there is an overtly

¹²¹ Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, *Group Identity in the Renaissance World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), xxxiii.

biopolitical aspect,¹²² where an idea of spiritual healing (or holiness) is broadly politicized as a cultural phenomenon. Her statement demonstrates the fact how liberating theology, like Calvinism, had its own entrenched dogmas differentiating self from other.

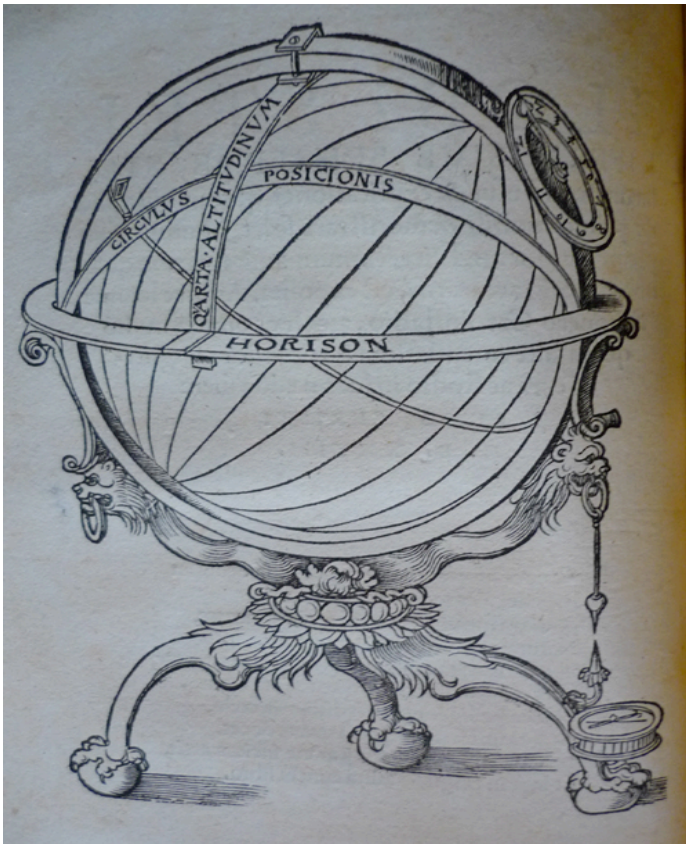


Figure 3: *Globo Stelliferi, sive sphaere stellarum fixarum usus et explicationes* by Johann Schöner. Nuremberg 1533. Royal Astronomical Society. (Inv. No. n/a). Via Museum of the History of Science <mhs.ox.ac.uk/>

Social Class and the Group Body

Vaughan Lock's social position can be understood by comparing her writings to those of her father, Stephen Vaughan. For example, on the 30th of November, 1530, Stephen Vaughan wrote to Thomas Cromwell from Antwerp. In the letter, the Protestant merchant sent news on the travels of Charles V and

¹²² See Michel Foucault's portrayal of biopolitics in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1978).

reported the ill health of Emperor's aunt, Lady Margaret of Austria. In addition, he updated Cromwell on the acquisition of sought-after objects. Vaughan said he had located a finely made globe and, as well, a book which, he claimed, "shall induce yow to the knowlage of all thinges conteyned and sett fourthe in the same."¹²³

Vaughn's letter traced a network of vital Renaissance forces: Hapsburgian geopolitics, mapping technologies (with the globe implying colonial and mercantile expansion) and a book, likely a product of the robust print economy of the Low Countries. And although it is not mentioned explicitly in the November 1530 text, Vaughan implies in the very act of writing another emergent force: namely, William Tyndale. The historical record shows Vaughan was travelling to Antwerp to meet with the exiled Tyndale. Henry VIII and Cromwell purportedly brokered the mission.¹²⁴ Safeguarded by global Protestantism in Antwerp,

¹²³ Margaret was "very sore diseased," Vaughan writes, "and in greate perell of her lyfe"; indeed, she would die December 1. See *SP*, Vol. 7, No. 286: 268–9.

¹²⁴ Since Vaughan did not hold his official post with the crown as "writer of books" until 1531, Geoffrey Elton argues that Vaughan's trip was not on behalf of the crown. See Elton, *Reform and Renewal, Thomas Cromwell and the Common Weal* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1973). See also M. K. D., "Vaughan, Stephen"

Tyndale was a rogue English body threatening the authority and expression of the Henrician status quo.¹²⁵

If Tyndale represented dissonance in English reform, it was the author Stephen Vaughan who synthesized in his letter an assemblage of sixteenth-century material culture. Vaughan, who created wealth from importing cloth from London, had recently become one of Cromwell's "men"; he would soon become a beneficiary of the dissolution of the monasteries,¹²⁶ a financier for Henry VIII, and, finally, a member of Parliament (elected in 1547). Vaughan was a consistent

Entry in *The House of Commons: 1509–1558*, ed. Stanley T. Bindoff (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, Ltd. 1982).

¹²⁵ See David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994). See also James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and Its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007), 35: "In 1530 [Tyndale] attacked the prelacy in his *Practice of Prelates*, and in 1531 he produced *An Answer unto Thomas More's Dialogue*."

¹²⁶ Cromwell gave Vaughan St. Mary Spital parish of St. Botolph's Bishop's Gate. See Susanne Woods, "Anne Lock and Aemilia Lanyer: A Tradition of Protestant Women Speaking," *Form and Reform in Renaissance England: Essays in Honor of Barbara Kiefer Lewalski*, ed. Amy Boesky and Mary Thomas Crane (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2000), 172.

advocate for Protestantism, and simultaneously, a representative figure for the economic changes of the early modern period. As Charles H. George and Katherine George write in *The Protestant Mind of the Reformation*, it was Protestantism that succeeded in consecrating the “economic life” as the “central activity of the world.”¹²⁷ In any case, merchant-class Protestant men were integral in the network of English reform, and Vaughan played a prominent role.

Thirty years after his mission to Antwerp, when Vaughan’s daughter Anne Vaughan Lock wrote the dedicatory letter to the Duchess of Suffolk, she demonstrated both her family’s Protestant humanist legacy,¹²⁸ and also her own unprecedented evangelical nonconformity. Encouraged by the reformer John Knox, her host and friend, she translated sermons from Geneva’s spiritual teacher—at-large, Jean Calvin. Again, like her father, Vaughan Lock was inclined to influence the religious tenor of court circles, evident in that she addresses the

¹²⁷ Charles H. George and Katherine George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation: 1570–1640* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1961), 160.

¹²⁸ Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, Rpt. (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1989), 221: “Anne [Boleyn] used her influence and patronage first to protect and then to advance the gospellers,” including Vaughan Lock’s mother who was a silk woman in the court of Henry VIII and was known, along with Joan Wilkinson, as a “fervent gospeller.”

translations to Lady Katharine, who was a fellow Marian exile. Like her father, Vaughan Lock likely composed the text from the Continent, or directly after her return. It was Geneva, Switzerland (approximately 700 miles south of her father's Netherlandish sojourns), where Vaughan Lock sought protection during Mary's reign within a nexus of committed evangelicals.¹²⁹

While her father Vaughan communicated geopolitical information and the swag of markets in the Netherlands, Vaughan Lock included the translated text of Protestant exegesis, and a sonnet sequence. It is worthwhile to distinguish between Stephen Vaughan's correspondences with Henry VIII as a diplomat (serving the hegemony of the Tudor state), versus Vaughan Lock's Protestant publication, composed as an act of resistance under Mary Tudor. Indeed, the socioeconomic registers of Vaughan Lock's text are not clearly continuous with those of her father.

¹²⁹ Lock lived in Geneva from approximately 1557 to 1559 during the Marian exile. See Susan M. Felch, "Introduction," *The Collected Works of Anne Vaughan Lock*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, Vol. 185 (Tempe, AZ: Renaissance English Text Society, 1999): xxv: "Mary Tudor was increasing her pressure on the English non-conformists and had already executed several prominent spokesmen including Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley in 1555."

The sonnets appeared at the end of her translation of sermons by Calvin, and they certainly had an admixture of social and religious motivations typical of the Reformation. Similar to other writers who enacted their subject position through psalm-writing, Vaughan Lock leveraged her pious writings towards political ends. Indeed, Joan Linton argues:

even reciting vernacular Psalms could become a political statement as seen in Foxe's accounts of Dr. Rowland Taylor who for reciting Psalm 51 in English was struck by the sheriff, and of Lady Jane Grey who awaiting execution, recited the Psalm of "Miserere mei Deus" in English.¹³⁰

The context of English psalm-writing meant that Vaughan Lock's activity can be seen as a calculated political move.¹³¹ The dedication to Duchess of

¹³⁰ Joan Pong Linton, "The Plural Voices of Anne Askew," in *Write or Be Written: Early Modern Women Poets and Cultural Constraints*, ed. Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2001), 141.

¹³¹ There is disagreement over whether the psalms signaled a "sanctioned" safe discourse in which pious women could deflect criticism, or whether it was a politically charged activity. See Hannay, "So May I with the Psalmist Truly Say," 106: "Psalm paraphrase and mediation could be safely used in times of political crisis, even to express anger and a desire for vengeance, because Psalms were a sanctioned form of discourse for both men and women,

Suffolk anticipated an audience with religious sympathies, since Lady Katherine was a fellow Marian exile with Vaughan Lock in Geneva. Hallett Smith writes that a motivation for versifying the psalms was to compete with courtly lyric.¹³²

In her English publication of the Calvin's sermons, Vaughan Lock demonstrated that she was committed to the cause of reform, and that she wanted to exert a voice of "power of voice" and daring¹³³ comparable to her father's intrepid negotiations with Tyndale. Susanne Woods writes that Lock's

for both Catholics and Protestants." In contrast, see Joan Pong Linton, "The Plural Voices of Anne Askew," 140.

¹³² Indeed, Hallett Smith has explained that a primary motivation of the writing the psalms in verse form was to "compete with the profane lyrics of the courtiers." Two other reasons for Renaissance poets versifying the psalms was that early moderns knew the original Hebrew psalms were in meter and also, as Smith writes, meter was used for the "ease of memorizing." Hallett Smith, "English Metrical Psalms in the Sixteenth Century and Their Literary Significance," *HLQ* 9, No.1/4 (1945/1946): 254–5.

¹³³ Kel Morin-Parsons "'Thus Crave I Mercy': The Preface of Anne Lock," in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, ed. Helen Ostovich, Mary V. Silcox, and Graham Roebuck (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1999), 271.

dedication is “distinctly the voice of a woman speaking with authority.”¹³⁴ Woods indicates that Lock’s embodiment as woman comes through here, and that despite her unequal status, she is able to speak confidently, a claim also made by Susan Felch.

Vaughan Lock intended to influence the newly formed court of Elizabeth with her *Sermons of John Calvin*.¹³⁵ But the sonnet form showed she wished to cultivate cultural forms, as well as religious truth. Itself a product of a rising readership of “urban non-aristocrats,” the printed sonnet shows that Vaughan Lock retains the mercantile values of her mother the silk woman and her father the importer.¹³⁶ Early moderns certainly knew that the psalms could offer marked

¹³⁴ Woods, “*Anne Lock and Aemilia Lanyer*,” 174.

¹³⁵ The book was not her first foray into influencing Tudor policy, since in 1552 Vaughan Lock and her husband had hosted Knox to preach before Edward VI.

¹³⁶ In *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England*, Christopher Warley argues that Vaughan Lock’s project (in adopting the transitional genre of the sonnet) also “participates in the relocation of authority out of social institutions and into commodity ownership” (54).

social mobility, as in the case of Sternhold under Henry VIII.¹³⁷ I would argue that Vaughan Lock's conflation of the sonnets and psalms doubly signals the kind of mobility afforded by verse sequences in the period. As Susan Felch writes, Vaughan Lock's text "was issued by the Protestant printer John Day and offered as a New Year's gift to a well-connected woman at the court, Catherine Brandon Bertie."¹³⁸ Suzanne Hull confirms that the late sixteenth century saw the "emergence of a female reading public," which Hull connects to the mobilizing of the middle class. She writes that a "small but steady stream of books for a female

¹³⁷ See Frank Whigham and Wayne Rebhorn, *The Art of English Poesy by George Puttenham: A Critical Edition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2007), 107.

Whigham and Rebhorn note the potential jealousy Puttenham has for Sternhold: "And King Henry VIII, her Majesty's father, for a few psalms of David turned into English meter by Sternhold, made him groom of his privy chamber, and gave him many other gifts." See also p. 119: "And these hymns to the gods was the first form of poesy and the highest and stateliest, and they were sung by the poets as priests and by the people or whole congregation, as we sing in our churches the psalms of David."

¹³⁸ Susan M. Felch, "Anne Vaughan Lock," in *Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers*, ed. Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay (New York: Modern Language Association, 2000), 127.

audience began to appear on the English book market in the 1570s.”¹³⁹ Most of those books, as Hull notes, were manuals on how to conform to the requirements of polite society, encouraging chastity and obedience; most were written by men. If we use Hull’s timeline, Vaughan Lock was publishing a decade before the historical rise of women’s print culture.

Feminist scholars have uncovered the sixteenth century, moreover, as a period when changes to social organizations were antithetical to the empowerment of women. Studying the centralizing powers of the Protestant Reformation and of the rise of the nation-state, scholars such as Joan Kelly and Suzanne Hull have argued that women’s experience of community and group life was being altered in salient ways, mostly towards a new form of private life that restricted women’s role in markets and religious communities.¹⁴⁰ Others have seen this time where women were more bound by the private household as a

¹³⁹ However, Hull puts the dates of this market as slightly later than Vaughan Lock’s text. See *Chaste, Silent, Obedient*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Joan Kelly (formerly Joan Kelly-Gadol), “Did Women have a Renaissance?” *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1977). See also, Hull, *Chaste, Silent, Obedient*, 1982.

time when education for women was on the rise, resulting in more women writers in the Renaissance. Sarah Gwyneth Ross writes,

Women authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries enjoyed and capitalized upon the cultural legitimacy that patriarchal sanction—or its representation—afforded. By publishing their works within the safety of family networks and deploying familial metaphor when approaching male patrons, women themselves used “the intellectual family” as a rhetorical device for making their novel status as scholars and authors appealing to contemporary culture.¹⁴¹

It is clear that Vaughan Lock was one of those women who “capitalized” on the familial, paternalistic structure, specifically in relation to literacy. If there are advantages to the privatization of women’s experience in the period, then it seems one might look more closely into the tonality and affect of those experiences. How did Vaughan Lock signal her place within these changing networks of private and public power?

Healing Science as Embodied Metaphor

The motifs of healing science in Vaughan Lock’s epistolary dedication (and as well in the sonnets) are ways in which she may have signaled her station in the economic and cultural shift to private middle-class lifeways. In Vaughan Lock’s metaphor, her translation of Calvin was a stand-in for healing science, and her rendering of his words were herbal compounds. The letter develops the idea

¹⁴¹ Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Women as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2009), 2.

of the word of God as medicine for the mind, a trope common to Calvinism and Protestantism more largely.¹⁴² Vaughan Lock herself creates an original motif, wherein her translation is a commercial enterprise, related to the market of pharmaceuticals. “This medicine is in this litle boke brought from the plentiful shop and storehouse of Gods holye testament.”¹⁴³ Lock’s prologue initiates a repeated comparison between physical and spiritual healing, with Lock naming spiritual sickness as the most acute and claiming that the best physician is one who cures “a sick or soore mynde.” In the letter (or prologue), Lock casts Calvin as an early-modern pharmacist. Lock writes, “God the heavenly Physitian hath taught, his most excellent Apothecarie master John Calvine hath compounded, and I your graces most bounden and humble have put into an Englishe box, and do present unto you.”¹⁴⁴ These references underscore the way that Vaughan Lock wielded a desirable product, one prepared for the English markets of literature.

¹⁴² Felch, “Introduction,” xli. This is a reference, as Felch notes in her introduction, to the early modern medical hierarchy of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries.

¹⁴³ Lock, *The Collected Works*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

These motifs appear to contradict scholarship that sees women's economic life as beleaguered in the period. Vaughan Lock was able to confidently appropriate rhetorics from mercantile contexts. Moreover, the conflation of mercantile and healing motifs refers to the most widely available spheres of women's economic activity in the period: that of healer and maker of household remedies. Lock probably provided medical care for her friends and family; furthermore, throughout the sixteenth century significant numbers of women practiced as both licensed and unlicensed physicians as well as midwives.¹⁴⁵

This last point by Felch might be debated by those who argue instead that women's roles in medicine were declining in the Renaissance. Women had to increasingly work under masculinist agendas to enact their own desires for economic participation. As Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt write, the "emerging bourgeois ideology relegated [women] to the domestic sphere and its attendant obligations."¹⁴⁶ Similarly, Betty S. Travitsky writes that, "The role of women in the economy generally became limited to less creative and entrepreneurial roles,

¹⁴⁵ Felch, "Introduction," *Collected Works*, xlii.

¹⁴⁶ Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt, eds., "Introduction," *Write or Be Written*, x. See also iv: "There can be no assurance that writing can hold at bay or stave off the attempts of others to script our identities, our selves, our lives."

subsidiary to those of male producers.”¹⁴⁷ Considering those who celebrate the increase in women’s literacy in the period, and considering as well those who lament the decline of public economic life, I believe that Vaughan Lock might be viewed as a point of convergence of these multiple directions. Because her life crosses social and religious contexts, Vaughan Lock shows us the changing role of women in process. I argue that this changing role expresses its fear of loss, as well as its celebration of gain, through vivid motifs of the body.

The Calvinist Grotesque

In Vaughan Lock, we can watch Protestant culture create itself as something that appears to be separate from the embodied, natural world, but which at the same time was articulated precisely from an embodied location. The soul calls “with shreking crye” for mercy. “This horror when my trembling soul doth hear” features the metaphor of fear as a moving body. “As in the throte of hell, I quake for fear” (line 62). These expressions of fear are tropes of Calvinist theology, but also difficult to reduce to an orthodox transmittal of Calvin. I argue that these indicate the experience of being a woman during a time when women’s public roles were under duress. Specifically, Vaughan Lock’s texts

¹⁴⁷ Betty S. Travitsky, “Introduction,” *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1990), 18.

reflect the psychic costs of engaging structures of power that increasingly delimited female embodiments. Scholars have argued that Vaughan Lock's imagery of the body negotiates the "problems of gendered voice," transcending social relations by "the demolition of the body."¹⁴⁸ "The body continuing to fail as the soul strives to obtain remedy emphasizes the positive nature of the soul's struggle by contrast," Kel Morin-Parsons writes, "while simultaneously neutralizing the body as a sign of (gendered) power."¹⁴⁹ These accounts take seriously the embodied rhetoric of Vaughan Lock's texts, but the emphasis on transcending the body ignores the possibility that it is precisely the affective body that registers here. Rather than extrapolating from the text a social and religious procedure, we might see these texts as evidence of a lived and felt body. If the psalm paraphrase does not name the gender of the suffering body, that does not mean that the underlying body is nonexistent. Indeed, the text must include residue from visceral experience, whatever its spiritual aspirations.

¹⁴⁸ Morin-Parsons, "'Thus Crave I Mercy,'" 271.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

Imagery of the Mouth in Anne Vaughan Lock's Poetry (1560)

Which proveth that the peines and diseases of minde and soule are not only the most grievous, and most daungerous, but also they onely are painfull and perilous, and those of the body and fortune are such as the mynde useth, and maketh them.

—Anne Vaughan Lock, *Sermons of Calvin*¹⁵⁰

Lord, of thy mercy if thou me withdraw
From gaping throte of depe devouring hell
Loe, I shall preach the justice of thy law (LI. 283–285)

—Anne Vaughan Lock, “A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner”

For the sixteenth-century Calvinist, the gateway to hell was a “throte,” and the sinner was under imminent threat of being swallowed into its “devouring,” “gaping” depths. The verse above is from a sonnet by Vaughan Lock. The poem comes within a series of other sonnets that use the motion of chewing to describe spiritual suffering. In the poem “Have mercie, Lord, have mercie,” the speaker’s soul undergoes “gnawing paine.”¹⁵¹ In another sonnet, the speaker claims to feel sin as the “gnawing of my heart” (LI. 134, 37). Vaughan Lock advocated for the evangelical cause with digestive motifs throughout “A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner: upon the 51 Psalm.”

The sonnet sequence was printed the end of her translated sermons of Jean Calvin, her pastor in Geneva. Indeed, critics have agreed that Vaughan

¹⁵⁰ Vaughan Lock, *Sermons of Calvin*, 4.

¹⁵¹ See also “In whom tastelesse languor with lingring paine / Hath febled so the starved appetite / That food to late is offred all in vaine” (LI. 343–5).

Lock's spiritual imaginary is based on the writings of Calvin, who himself translated and extensively commented on the psalms. Moreover, the abject sense of the flesh can also be observed in Calvin's sermons and treatises. Believers were the ones "divided against themselves".¹⁵² Calvin claimed that the first man Adam was proof that sin is not caused by God but was corrupted by the flesh: "So our ruin proceeds from the sin of our flesh," Calvin writes, "not from God, given that we are lost for no other cause than for having fallen away from our first creation."¹⁵³

Both Vaughan Lock and Calvin were reinterpreting ancient Christian expressions when they use bodily rhetoric to argue for the primacy of the spirit.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² David C. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 108–9: "Paul's anguished cry, 'O wretched man that I am,' describes human life under grace (as old Augustine rightly taught) rather than under law (as young Augustine wrongly believed). In Calvinism, Romans 7:14–25 is taken to mean that the divided self is a sign of grace."

¹⁵³ Quotations from Calvin's *Institutes* taken from Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: The First English Version of the 1541 French Edition*, trans. Elsie Anne McKee (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2009).

¹⁵⁴ Wyatt's language of medical treatment is followed up multiple times, such as in Psalm 38, where his "secret lust" is the source of "each not well cured

Augustine was a major figure for allegorizing the body and the material world, influential to the Renaissance period. In the *Confessions*, Augustine repeatedly compares medical and spiritual healing. In Book 6, Augustine says that God revived him through a lancing of his infection. “Your scalpel,” Augustine addresses the Creator, “cut to the quick of the wound.”¹⁵⁵ When explaining why he resisted God, Augustine compares it to having once been attended by a quack physician and not wanting to risk another: “I resisted your healing hands, though you have prepared the medicines of faith, have applied them to the sicknesses of the world.”¹⁵⁶

wound” and in Psalm 51, where the psalmist’s verbal acts are “purging [him] from blood” (345–7, 491).

¹⁵⁵ Quotations from Augustine are taken from *Saint Augustine: Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), 97.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 95. In Book 3, Augustine’s penchant for entertainments in Carthage, such as watching theatre, are described as “a disgusting sore,” or “the scratches of fingernails” that make “inflamed spots, pus, and repulsive sores.” See also p. 130: “With avid intensity, I seized the sacred writings of your Spirit and especially the apostle Paul.” They are part of Augustine’s highly self-conscious narrative on abandoning the lure of the sensuous world (embodied in

Augustinian and Protestant traditions of anti-materialism, moreover, were rooted in the earliest writings of Christianity—namely, the letters of Saint Paul, which had multiple references to the abjection of the flesh. The anti-body discourse of Paul resides in a metaphysical belief in the resurrection of Christ and thus the resurrection of Christians, which is represented in this verse of first Corinthians: “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God [. . .] For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:50–53).¹⁵⁷ I wonder whether these

his early Gnostic spiritual practice). “Why are you then perversely,” Augustine writes, “following the leading of your flesh?”

¹⁵⁷ The letter to the Romans (framed with a diatribe against homosexual practices) repeatedly insists on a spiritual reality as an alternative to the body. In a message about privileging spiritual kinship over tribal or familial alliances, Paul writes that the faithful were God’s children by adoption (Romans 8:15). Outward circumcision, Paul argues, is not necessary, because one “is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart” (Romans 2:28–29). Paul relegates the most essential Jewish ritual of the body, the cutting away of the male foreskin, to a metaphor of circumcision that relocates identity in the heart. This dramatic abstraction is repeated throughout the letters, such as when Paul

exercises of power, which in early Christianity were inclusive of women by degree, in the Renaissance were accessible to women. This chapter will contend with the difficult process of parsing out how much (by degree) women would relate to anti-body discourses. Did they feel it as an oppression to their gender? Did they adopt these discourses as a way to transcend sexual difference? The opposing directions of the previous two questions are present, I argue, in Vaughan Lock's imagery throughout her prefatory letter and translation. That is, this chapter assesses the liberatory and the abject dimensions of Vaughan Lock's project.

It is relevant to consider the subjective way that Vaughan Lock might have perceived the anti-body discourse as a woman. But this chapter will also identify and assess the underlying origin of that anti-body discourse. That is, I am

writes that "our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). Or the famous Pauline phrase that Christians "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). One great strength of Christianity was its leaving aside of tribal signals of identity for a wider, multi-national, inter-ethnic religion. But the agonized legacy was its rejection of embodiment. "That is why this corruptible body which we have will not perish in our resurrection but, leaving its corruption, it will be made incorruptible, and leaving its mortality, it will be made immortal" (1 Corinthians 15:41, 53).

interested in the adoption of Augustine by evangelicals in the sixteenth century and its implications for the sociopolitical aspects of Calvinism.

The *Institutes* of John Calvin set forth a view of God, man, and the Church, which goes far to explain why Calvinism should have been the most active variety of Protestantism. The drive of Calvinism stems from optimism as to God despite pessimism to man. [. . .] Calvin renewed the role of St. Augustine who terminated the early Christian expectation of the speedy coming of the Lord. [. . .] Even so Calvin substituted for the great and imminent day of the Lord the dream of the Holy Commonwealth in the terrestrial sphere.¹⁵⁸

The current sense of Vaughan Lock's English national identity (and the emphasis on her contributions to the English Puritan movement) can be augmented into the complex, broader, and globalizing contexts of the sixteenth century, such as the reference to "mighty wall" that "enclose[s]" "Hierusalem," which will "never fall."¹⁵⁹ In both aesthetic assessments and gendered treatments of the sonnet sequence, the focus is on Vaughan Lock's national identity, and her contribution to English verse. Vaughan Lock is seen as an "English Calvinist."¹⁶⁰ And Vaughan Lock's attempt to translate continental text is taken at face value, with the New Jerusalem in the last sonnet seen as "England's return to

¹⁵⁸ Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon, 1952), 112–3.

¹⁵⁹ Sonnet 20.

¹⁶⁰ Warley, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction*, 49.

Protestantism under Queen Elizabeth.”¹⁶¹ To return to the metaphor from the previous section of the pharmacist’s healing, in Lock’s and Calvin’s tautology, “Suche remedye as here is conteined,” writes Lock, “can no Philosopher, no Infidele, no Papist minister.”¹⁶² This demonstrates a subjectivity forged through a comparative sense, with international bodies of faith cast in racialized and ethnic terminology.

Adoption of the Lapsed Body: Augustine, Paul, and Calvin

Vaughan Lock participated in reforming the cultural imagination of the Protestant body by adopting the abjected, lapsed body of her religious community. Her nightmarish depictions of the throat and mouth (vocal, oral, erotic), or strange depictions of guts or digestion (feeding, eating, and digesting), demonstrate as well a complex group identity. I base my reading on new work that argues that the Renaissance was an era that “heralded the transformation of the group, and of the community.”¹⁶³ Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski has recently argued that:

In a variety of senses, the desire to incorporate, together with the fear of incorporation by alien groups, propelled the colonizing process from its beginnings. These desires and fears were frequently expressed in oral terms—that is, with images and

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 48.

¹⁶² *Collected Works*, 5.

¹⁶³ Chapelle Wojciehowski, *Group Identity*, xxviii.

metaphors of eating or feeding on the one hand, and of being eaten on the other. The group, as Anzieu famously declared, is a mouth—and never more openly, perhaps, than in the sixteenth century.¹⁶⁴

Interestingly, Wojciehowski debunks the notion that the Renaissance was about galvanizing the individual, reminding us that it was a time of rapid expansion, with proliferating contact with cultures and new geographies. Indeed, Vaughan Lock herself navigated continental and English contexts of reform, hostile and welcoming political spheres (under Mary Tudor and then Elizabeth), secular and sacred communities, devotional and courtly literatures. It is clear that Vaughan Lock's texts demonstrate a "desire to incorporate, together with the fear of incorporation." In Calvinism, the concept of group identity was intensified by the fact that as they spread from Geneva, religious bodies of faith faced problems of disorder with mobilizing change. "In [France, the Netherlands, Spain, and England], however divergent, the problem was essentially an old one—whether the ancient system of one land and one church could be abandoned without social chaos."¹⁶⁵

Most have accepted that Vaughan Lock's is an "unoriginal" or "orthodox" form of Calvinism. I argue instead that she does important work for the group in

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 81.

¹⁶⁵ Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 160.

consolidating evangelical procedures. At the beginning, for example, the speaker communicates loathing as being unable to speak God's name: "So as I dred to take / Thy name in wretched mouth" (LI. 89–90). Later in the psalm paraphrases, the speaker repeatedly refers to having an open mouth able to sing praise: "my joying tong shall talke thy praise / Thy name my mouth shall utter in delight, / My voice shall sounde thy justice, and thy waies."¹⁶⁶

In her paraphrase of Psalm 51, Lock continues to insist that the body is a poor substitute for the more profound realities of spirit. As in Wyatt, in Lock the weakness of the outward body contrasts with the desire for an inward faith. In sonnet 10, Lock writes, "my broosed bones that thou with paine / Hast made to weake my febled corps to beare / Shall leape for joy, to shewe myne inward chere"; in sonnet 19, she similarly says the body is weak and unable to contain the spirit: "To hold in fainting corps the fleing sprite" (LI. 225–27, 346). In Lock's paraphrase of psalm 51, the speaker asks God to implant the Holy Spirit in her bowels: "A sprite so settled and so firmly pight / Within my bowels, that it never move, / But still uphold the assurance of thy love" (LI. 250–253).

¹⁶⁶ Anne Vaughan Lock, *A Meditation*, LI. 305–307. All Lock quotations and line numbers are from Susan Felch, ed., *The Collected Works of Anne Vaughan Lock* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

The sonnet's imagery integrates the lower regions of the body, the abdomen (a site both for reproduction and digestion) with divine salvation. The speaker's invitation to the Holy Spirit to penetrate the bowels (and then to stay there) is a richly imagined physicality, which suggests, among other possibilities, the suffering of constipation.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the interpenetration of the physical body and spirit appears to be celebratory and cathartic.

These invitations for God's healing through radical interaction with the body contrast with alternative moments in the sequence, where the tropes signal the body's complete inadequacy. The following sonnet "For lo, in sinne, Lord, I begotten was" refers to original sin within tropes of a mother's conceiving (the speaker is "begotten" within a natural state of "sinne" due to the speaker's "kind").

¹⁶⁷ In the Renaissance, the word "bowels" referred to the "alimentary canal" or "the intestines or entrails." The word also signified more generally the "guts" or "any internal organ." Most of the uses in the *OED* suggest the word as related to disease or the guts, making it less likely that the poet referred to other possible internal organs, such as the uterus. See "bowel, n.1," *OED Online* March 2013. Oxford University Press. 2 May 2013
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/22207?rskey=9vFRAf&result=1&isAdvanced=false>>.

The motifs transition to tropes of blooms, seed, and fruit, all motifs common as well to Calvinist and evangelical ideas of original sin.

For lo, in sinne, Lord, I begotten was,
With sede and shape my sinne I toke also,
Sinne is my nature and my kind alas,
In sinne my mother me conceived: Lo
I am but sinne, and sinfull ought to dye,
Dye in his wrath that hath forbidden sinne.
Such bloome and frute loe sinne doth multiplie,
Such was my roote, such is my juyse within.
I please not this as to excuse my blame,
On kynde or parents myne owne guilt to lay:
But by disclosing of my sinne, my shame,
And nede of helpe, the plainer to displaye
Thy mightie mercy, if with plenteous grace
My plenteous sinnes it please thee to deface.

In *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1541)¹⁶⁸ Calvin explains the reason for such a self-deprecating view of the person, believing, as Luther did, that the person was lowly and born in sin. Calvin writes of Psalm 51:

¹⁶⁸ The first edition of the *Institutes* was published in 1536 and the second in 1539. See Ozment, *The Age of Reform*, 352–380. Bainton, *Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, 112–5:

The *Institutes* of John Calvin set forth a view of God, man, and the Church, which goes far to explain why Calvinism should have been the most active variety of Protestantism. The drive of Calvinism stems from optimism as to God despite pessimism as to man. [. . .] Calvin renewed the role of St. Augustine who terminated the early Christian expectation of the speedy coming of the Lord. [. . .] Even so Calvin substituted for the great and imminent day of the Lord the dream of the Holy Commonwealth in the terrestrial sphere.

Certain what David confessed cannot be doubted, that “he was born in iniquity and his mother conceived in sin” (Ps. 51[5]) [. . .] he reminds himself of his corruption from the moment of his birth. [. . .] Now all of us who are born of unclean seed are born stained with the infection of sin, and even before we come forth into the light we are contaminated before God’s face.¹⁶⁹

Calvin thus locates in Psalm 51 a spiritual axiom, based on Job. This seed motif, and as well the motif of God’s face, indicate the profound sense of inequity written into evangelical thought. What Lock inherited was the Augustinian and Pauline visions of the sinful body as a site of disciplinary torture, horror, and disease. But what Lock did with that in the repetition and dilation, doubling and tripling focus, was to create a text communicating immense pain. If she repeated Calvin’s metaphors, she repeated them over and again in a way that creates a new influence.

The mouth held both the abject and liberatory functions. In one sonnet, she asks God to “Loose my lippes [. . .] And findyng grace with open mouth I may / Thy mercies praise” (LI. 322–324). In “Lord, of thy mercy if thou me withdraw” (close to the finale) the speaker addresses the figure of God and bargains for delivery from hell. “Thou me withdraw / From gaping throte of depe devouring hell” (sonnet 15). In another sonnet, she writes about speaking God’s name “In

¹⁶⁹ From “Of the Knowledge of Man and of Free Will,” Calvin, *Institutes*, 51.

thankfull mouthes,” which is repeated several times across the sequence (line 370).

Even the angels are represented within the aesthetics of the digestive grotesque, as suggested by the following lines: “To crave the crummes of all sufficing grace” (L. 73). “The face that fedes angels with onely sight” (LI. 260). “The tast / that thy love whilome did embrace” (L. 272). How does the body communicate across media that are anathema to its shape and form? As Roland Greene writes, we find Vaughan Lock in a “post-medieval context of feminine copiousness and dilation. He-turned-she is a type of the human being who [. . .] has lived at the limit of worldly sinfulness, who has been horrifically open-ended, who has become gaped and swollen.”¹⁷⁰

Conclusion

I raise these questions of embodied Calvinism and the experience of Renaissance women within evangelical communities not to obscure the religious commitments of sixteenth-century subjects. Indeed, the work I do in this dissertation is based on the assumption—whether the person be Anne Vaughan Lock, or Thomas Wyatt, or Luther, or Calvin, or John Fisher—that these subjects had authentic and deep investments in their faith and that they were engaged with spiritual imperatives. Theology and Scripture factored largely into both pious

¹⁷⁰ Roland Greene, “Anne Lock’s Meditation,” 164.

and secular literatures in the time period. And due to the influence of the Bible (and the Psalms) I argue that the whole of English poetry should be viewed through a lens of religious history. The period of the Reformation, after all, was a period that exalted the word in new ways and caused a great influx of textuality. To be a reformer in the sixteenth century, for example, was to weekly, even daily, read the Scriptures, listen to preaching (or give an exegetical oration), study Scripture privately, and for some subjects to translate and interpret texts, such as the Psalms. Thus was the sacred Word formative to writing after the Reformation, as John N. King and Barbara Lewalski have argued.

But the focus on the word and spirit (and as well the renewal of anti-body discourses from Paul and Augustine) does not mean that embodied and gendered experience was divorced from sacred practice. Thus I read texts such as Wyatt's *Paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms* and Anne Vaughan Lock's "A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner" as integrative of lived, embodied realities.

Why do I insist on the body even when we cannot prove definitively how writers connected their lived experience and their writing? For the purpose of reminding us that religious experience cannot be bifurcated from political strata, class economies, gender and sexuality, or architectures of space and ecology.

However deeply maintained (and it is clear that Vaughan Lock's evangelical nonconformity was deeply and authentically held), these beliefs happen within, inside, and through the material sphere. I believe that subjects

who maintained anti-body, anti-flesh axioms were still inherently communicating about the body. Ethan Shagan writes that, “If religion permeated every aspect of sixteenth-century experience, that implies that religion itself was not a rigid or self-contained sphere but rather was structured through its interactions with the culture in which it was imbedded.”

The crucial issues in this chapter are not meant to be resolved but are meant to define new sites of study in Anne Vaughan Lock. The following questions represent the kinds of issues that are networked together across the chapter:

1. How does a woman obtain religious authority in a faith led by men?
2. What is the difference between Stephen Vaughan’s reform advocacy under Henry VIII and Vaughan Lock’s evangelical commitments under Mary and then Elizabeth I?
3. How does a text enact religious and cultural change?
4. Might that text preserve multiple possibilities and outcomes of that change, such as the liberatory and the coercive potentials of the privatization of women’s experience?
5. Or in the terms of Queer Historicism, might that text demonstrate alterities? In this chapter, I located these alterities in the Calvinist grotesque.

6. Given that the experience of Vaughan Lock is known to us only through her translations and dedications and poems (and John Knox's side of their correspondence) can we look to those texts to ask about her affective experiences and the tonality of her life in community?

For the past forty years, the study of Renaissance poetry has affirmed the material and lived practices of the sixteenth century, but primarily through social history. But now we want also to account for the affective and corporeal dimensions of Renaissance verse. Several sites for corporeality already exist, in Renaissance Galenic contexts, print technology, women's history, textual studies, and studies of diets and household remedies.¹⁷¹ Now the study of embodiment can integrate the study of religious textuality and devotional poetry as specific way of processing community and life. In the case of Vaughan Lock, it is the sonnet sequence that acts as a vibrant embodiment of multi-directional forces in the 1550s and 1560s.

¹⁷¹ At the 2013 meeting of Renaissance Society of America, Kimberly Ann Coles drew on her work related to women as nursemaids and as the purveyors of household diets and remedies. Her paper "'Confounding Distinction: Women and the Disruption of Rank in *All's Well That Ends Well*" discussed Helen's breastmilk as a disruption/complement to patriarchal power in the play.

Chapter 4:

“What’s in the brain that ink may character”?:

Renaissance Cognition and *Shake-speares Sonnets*

Materialist studies of literature will profit from acknowledging the brain as the material site where language, culture, and the body meet and form each other. [. . .] This recognition would take the form of scrutiny of texts not only for traces of ideological formations or cultural systems, but for traces of cognitive process as well.

—Mary Crane and Alan Richardson, “Literary Studies and Cognitive Science”

When Crane and Richardson proposed cognitive literary criticism in 1999, they stated that their purpose was to bring to light the latest knowledge about the brain, but also to discover historical cognition.¹⁷² “Literary studies will also need

¹⁷² From the 1980s when critics began in earnest to apply neuroscience to literature, to the 1990s when these methods were making their way into Shakespeare studies, the study of the brain became attached to the interpretation of Renaissance works. For representative emergent neurocriticism, see Richard P. Honeck and Robert R. Hoffman, eds., *Cognition and Figurative Language* (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1980). Mary Crane, Arthur Kinney, and Ellen Spolsky, among others, have for over fifteen years invited us to consider Renaissance texts as artifacts of cognition. See Mary Crane and Alan Richardson, “Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity,” *Mosaic* 32 (1999); Alan Richardson and Francis F. Steen,

to pay new attention,” they wrote, “to various writers’ attempts, through history, to imagine, understand, and represent their own cognitive processes.”¹⁷³ For scholars whose work includes Shakespeare’s Sonnets, brain-based approaches might seem intuitive, since Shakespeare himself explicitly communicated to his readers an incipient interest in the mind, reflection, and meta-cognition.¹⁷⁴ In almost every sonnet in the sequence Shakespeare refers to the mind, the imagination, wit, reason, thought, invention, and memory. It is possible to view certain earlier critics, for example, as having closely read cognition in

“Literature and the Cognitive Revolution: An Introduction,” *Poetics Today* 23.1 (2002), 1–8; Ellen Spolsky, “Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post-Structuralism,” *Poetics Today* 23.1 (2002), 43–62.

¹⁷³ Crane and Richardson, “Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity,” para. 20.

¹⁷⁴ See Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare’s Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare’s Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001); Charles H. Frey, *Making Sense of Shakespeare* (Cranberry, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson, 1999); Ellen Spolsky, “Literacy after Iconoclasm in the English Reformation,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39.2 (2009): 305–330.

Shakespeare's sonnets, despite the fact that these readings are not based in science.

This chapter makes a series of comparisons between cognition and Shakespeare's sonnets. I will cite some of the major sonnets that outline what Shakespeare thought about the brain. The first part of this chapter is devoted to the tropes of the brain in Shakespeare's two narrative poems, published approximately fifteen years before the sonnets. The model of cognition in these narratives uses the term "brain" and "mind" to contemplate the interplay of desire and morality, loss and trauma. In short, the brain is linked to human perception and human decision-making. The trope of epic romance as a mind-altering affective state might be seen an early-modern articulation of the brain.

The Brain in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*

The possibility of isolating cognition is made more realizable by sonnets that prominently feature how poems themselves shape thinking or reason. Sonnet 108 suggests Shakespeare's own attempt to understand or represent, if playfully and ironically, how literary forms and literary activity correspond with the brain:

What's in the brain that ink may character
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same,
Counting no old thing old; thou mine, I thine,

Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name:
So that eternal love, in love's fresh case,
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place
But makes antiquity for aye his page,
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.¹⁷⁵

The sonnet presents a curious cognitive problem at the heart of the writing process. Were there any more words in the brain, any ideas to “speak” or “register,” that would be a suitable, original expression? What words would be able to express feeling, or spirit? The abrupt answer posited by the sonnet—“Nothing”—appears jarring for its odd prosodic placement after a line break and at the start of a new quatrain. It is also jarring that the claim that “nothing” is in the brain is, nevertheless, immediately followed by the revelation that the activity of writing does not, and must not, cease. The speaker claims, “but yet, like prayers divine, / I must each day say o’er the very same, / Counting no old thing old.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ All quotations from the sonnets are from *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1997).

¹⁷⁶ This is the same theme as in sonnet 76: “Why is my verse so barren of new pride, / So far from variation or quick change?” On the other hand, sonnet 38 proposes inspiration that leads to the creation of new subjects or arguments: “How can my Muse want subject to invent / While though dost breathe, that

The reader is not told which form the (missing) verbalizations would take. Would they be words as recalled sounds, or imagined chirographically as alphabetic words and characters? Or, would these desired expressions merely latent pre-cognitive linguistic potentials? In sonnet 108, the literal creation of new language remains a mystery. Of his mental process, however, Shakespeare claims that his words are “conceits,” or ideas, a literary phenomenon others will read after the bodies of the author and the fair youth have long departed. That is, the sonnet distinguishes between perceptual experience (of life, of passion) and the representation of it.¹⁷⁷ Shakespeare was noting the ways in which sonnet-writing changed the brain, changed the relationship between the writer and his words, changed the energy of writing—and the feelings the writer had towards poetic invention.

pour’st into my verse / Thine own sweet argument?” The idiosyncratic attributes of invention are being played out among these various verses across the sequence.

¹⁷⁷ Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 3. Scarry writes that with writing the “imagined object lacks the vitality and vivacity of the perceived one.” See also page 7 for her definition of “perceptual mimesis,” or the way that texts embed perceptual elements with distinct qualities.

Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Perception

The correlation between the body and brain seems more direct in Shakespeare's narrative poems, since these narratives posit causal relationships between phenomenological (or physiological) experience and the mental event. Most commonly, the feeling body impinges upon the brain in the narratives. If the sonnets self-referentially play out the interaction of poetry and the mind, the narrative poems define the brain more narrowly, not in literary activity but for its role in romantic perception. In *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, the brain is part of a more straightforward phenomenology, an internal process focused around the visual experience of the love-object.¹⁷⁸ Both *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis* consistently refer to the relationship between sexual attraction and the action of the narrative. Venus is "sick-thoughted" from the beginning of the poem, which prompts her to press Adonis into an embrace and to pursue him across the pastoral landscapes of the poem (L. 5). The poem shows how thoughts are integral (even arguably synonymous) with epic action. The landscape (in which the actors move) plays out the contents of the will or brain as an outer scene.

¹⁷⁸ *Venus and Adonis* was published in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594. For a fuller account of these poems compared to the sonnets, see Heather

Like *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare's poem *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) also figures cognition but as related, in Colin Burrow's words, to the "misrelations between rhetoric and desire, between moral knowledge and passion."¹⁷⁹ An important binary in the poem, the minds of Lucrece and Tarquin are contrasted against each other in terms that affirm her chaste morality (she is "holy-thoughted" and has "unstained thoughts") and his sexual violation (he has "thoughts unjust," "unhallowed thoughts," and a "wicked mind") (ll. 384; 87; 189; 192; 1540).¹⁸⁰ Lucrece is curiously posed as the "heaven of his thought," an irony that illustrates Tarquin's fallen mind which has been contaminated by his

Dubrow, *Captive Victors: Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Sonnets* Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987).

¹⁷⁹ Burrow, 146. Henry Turner makes a similar point as Burrow about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "The 'mythic' conflict between an absolute, arbitrary law that remains removed from embodied persons and the driving force of a fully embodied desire that is entirely beyond reason [. . .] held a particular fascination for Shakespeare" (Henry S. Turner, *Shakespeare's Double Helix*, Shakespeare Now! Series (New York: Continuum, 2007): 26).

¹⁸⁰ All quotations and line numbers from *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are taken from *William Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002).

undisciplined intention towards a pure object (L. 338). The brain becomes a central reference in both narrative poems, in particular when trauma shifts the perception of the female heroines. In the final section of *Venus and Adonis*, Venus's psychological confrontation with core violence is cast in the language of cognition. Venus is unable to process the scene of her beloved Adonis gored to death by a boar: "So at his bloody view her eyes are fled / Into the deep-dark cabins of her head, / Where they resign their office, and their light / To the disposing of her troubled brain" (LI. 1037–40). The eyes of the goddess close against the slaughter; the trauma poses within the narrative as an entrance into vaster depths of pain than the brain can manage. According to Colin Burrow, this section of the poem "evokes a radically disturbing picture of the mind [. . .] [a] picture of mind in tumultuous rebellion."¹⁸¹ Scholars have noted the role of the mind in the narrative poems, although perhaps these have not been compared to the role of the mind in the sonnets. In addition, I would like to compare Shakespeare's writings about the brain in love to recent discoveries about the brain-based drive to love.

¹⁸¹ Burrow, 40.

Comparing Shakespeare's Sonnets to Contemporary Understandings of Perception and Romance

Earlier, I raised the question of whether the romantic topics of the sonnets illuminated cognition, or cognition romance. This information might demonstrate the intersections of social and biological sources of the erotic drive. Indeed, romantic love (the choice a lifetime mate) is one of the most enduring of brain-based patterns. An anthropologist who has been conducting research for years with neuroscientists, Helen Fisher distinguishes the sexual drive, which motivates subjects to range between multiple partners, and romantic love, which allows for the focus of energy on just one person. Looking at MRIs of people who had just been rejected, Fisher explains that the deep attachment to one person can be traced to a tiny region at the base of the brain: "the reptilian core of the brain associated with wanting, with motivation, with focus and with craving." It is called the ventral tegmental area, or VTA.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Helen Fisher, "The Brain in Love." *TED Talks*. February 2008.

<http://blog.ted.com/2008/07/15/the_brain_in_lo/>. Accessed 22 June 2011. See also Fisher, "The Drive to Love: The Neural Mechanism for Mate Selection," in *The New Psychology of Love*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert J. Sternberg and Karin Weis (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2006), 87–115.

Fisher's explanation that the VTA is activated both when falling in love, as well as when experiencing romantic loss, helps to explain the profound mental difficulty of being rejected. What happens when the beloved rejects us, or is absent? Fisher said, "You love them harder." When a subject cannot achieve its desire, the brain section (a primal,

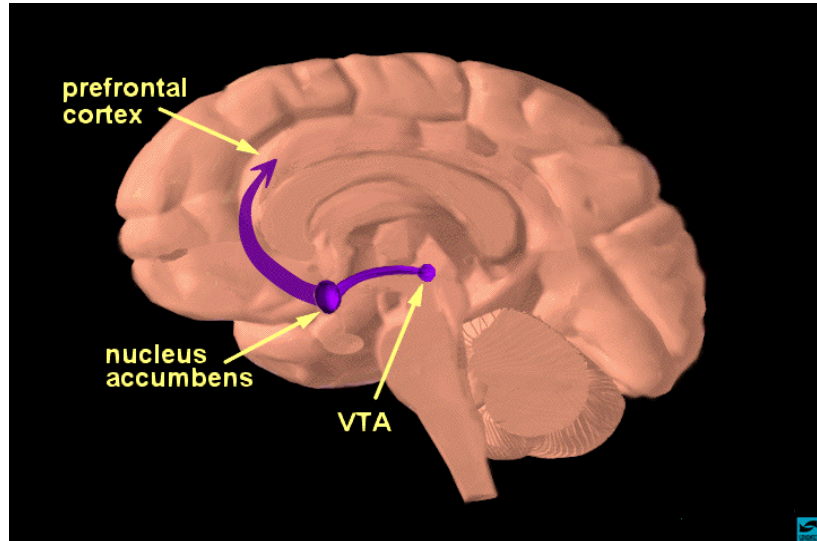


Figure 4: Image of VTA "Rewards Center" from the National Institute of Health
 <<http://www.nida.nih.gov/pubs/teaching/Teaching3.html>>

rewards-seeking system) becomes hyper-activated. If we can accept that the VTS activates with new love and with loss, then Shakespeare's sonnets will appear to be particularly prescient for addressing these experiences.¹⁸³ If it is also true our brain consistently and intensely drives a hunger for the beloved, then, it is no wonder that such mental events as romantic dreaming in

¹⁸³ Some researchers discourage such one-to-one correlations between a brain center and behavioral patterns. In "How Stories Make Us Feel," Chapelle Wojciehowski and Gallese call this "cognitivist ontologic reductionism," where "brain imaging techniques are the sole method of investigation" (12).

Shakespeare become charged with difficult feelings such as fear, anxiety, and despair.

Shakespeare and Cognition as a Written Process

But Shakespeare did not know about the primal brain-based impulse of pair bonding; nor had he the benefit of anthropological perspectives of erotic behavior. Certainly, his verses reflect what Fisher and others describe, such as in sonnet 47, where he writes, “For thou no farther than my thoughts can move, / and I am still with them, and they with thee.” That is, the speaker claims the fair youth’s movement is bound by the circumference of the speaker’s thought. The paradox is that Shakespeare’s thought is really trapped within the circumference of the youth’s memory. Overall, Shakespeare’s themes in the first section resonate with Fisher’s discovery. Romantic memory, the sonnets say, intensifies with rejection. The biggest difference, however, lies in Fisher’s link between correlation and causation.¹⁸⁴

The first main difference is that neuroscience often has positivist evidence to forge connections between brain and world. The Shakespearean text itself confuses straightforward causal understandings. Indeed, the mysterious origin of

¹⁸⁴ Indeed, at the end of TED talk, Fisher confesses her affiliation with the online dating site EHarmony, which attempts to apply proven scientific analytics to creating ‘love matches.’

romantic force is further confounded because sonnet 26, like many of the sonnets, indulges in literary intertextuality. Are the motivations for these cognitions ultimately based not in love, but in poetic virtuosity? Although Shakespeare writes that the poem (“this written embassy”) was meant not to show wit, he contradicts it by the poem itself. The claim that the poem has a romantic, rather than a writerly intention is meant to be recognized as an overt rhetorical flourish. The poem draws attention to its wit by saying it isn’t meaning to be witty. In this and many of the poems, the reader and Shakespeare share the knowledge that what is being written is a performance, a thought experiment, and an exercise of poetic acumen.

I argue that Shakespeare’s representations differentiate thinking with texts from thinking without texts, noting the difference between writing out a cognition and merely experiencing a lived event or memory. The nature of written ideas attenuate creative output in sonnet 108. If writing down a cognition causes it to exist across time, the crux is that texts would only continue to have life (to be read) if they were beautiful, if they showcased wit, or if they provided exemplary moral formation. The first quatrain of sonnet 108 is profoundly skeptical, therefore, about producing original language, with the speaker having drained his imaginative resources.

With palpable irony, the speaker describes what it is like to write through mental exhaustion. But the sonnet also explains the motivation for the relentless

pressures on the brain: the figure of “Eternal love.”¹⁸⁵ Love is personified as the imagined reader. The nominative subject of the third quatrain, “Eternal love” would look at the page years later, the speaker says, would not judge its “dust” or the “injury of age,” and would not give attention to the “wrinkles.” The reader would recognize—maybe even have empathy for—the plight of the poet who felt more than he was able to write, or whose brain posed a limit on expression in alphabetic language. “Eternal love” proposes a pseudo-moral basis for the speaker’s devotion to the young man, and justifies the poem’s lackluster writing. Sonnet 108 “makes sense” of writing literature in the face of disenchantment, ennui, and fatigue. Is it possible that Shakespeare has stopped talking about desire for the youth, and started talking about what writing is like?

Whereas sonnet 108 describes an unrealized verbal expression, sonnet 122 is represented as “full characterized” inside of the speaker’s brain. One way to

¹⁸⁵ I believe that the figure of Eternal Love functions in much the same way as personification operates in sonnet 116, where Love is described as an ever-fixed mark. As Stephen Booth writes, “The shadowy personification of *the remover* lets us do something like visualize an actor and action without knowing at all what they are.” Stephen Booth, ed., *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977), 49.

read this section is that his love for the beloved is chirographic, or imagined as letters seen inside the mind. As Roger Chartier notes:

The authors of these works transformed the material realities of writing and publication into an aesthetic resource, which they used to achieve poetic, dramatic, or narrative effects. The processes that bestowed existence on writing in its various forms, public or private, ephemeral or durable, thus became the very ground of literary invention.¹⁸⁶

Chartier explains what Shakespeare was doing in poems like sonnet 108 by aligning poetic invention with the “material realities of writing.” Chartier’s description is important because it shows how the referencing of these realities becomes an aesthetic tool, or mode.¹⁸⁷ Shakespeare had an investment in using tropes derived from lived, physical realities. He furthermore embeds these references as building blocks for a poetic epistemology.

¹⁸⁶ Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1995) xi.

¹⁸⁷ It is hard to read this verse without recalling Ong’s description of Renaissance literacy as the “interiorization of the alphabet” and “writing,” a process that Ong calls the beginning of a “chirographic culture,” where alphabetic language is seen as characters or words in the brain as a simulated visual phenomenon, rather than understood as a representation of sound, or a memory of aural phenomenon (28; 9; 41–42). Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. (London: Routledge, 2000).

As Ellen Spolsky writes,

If they could not get some relatively reliable information about the world outside their bodies, they could not survive for long, could not reproduce, etc. Note that this does not mean that the representational systems on which we depend are entirely or ideally reliable; it just means that they are reliable enough to have ensured the survival of the species thus far.¹⁸⁸

Shakespeare made sure to scaffold subjective, emotive information with such skeptical and nuanced treatments as to render the texts able to be read and interpreted across time. These scaffolds include pointers to the textual materiality that both enables and potentially degrades an empathetic reading.

In sonnet 145, Shakespeare writes:

Who will believe my verse in time to come
[. . .]
So should my papers (yellowed with their age)
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be termed a poet's rage,
And stretched metre of an antique song.

In this sonnet, Shakespeare draws upon a series of nostalgic and authenticating experiences, such as the yellowing of oxidized paper. The connection, moreover, of the aging text and human subject (those “old men of less truth than tongue”) universalizes the techniques of the poem. Shakespeare uses these commonplaces to confront the very problem the text is articulating:

¹⁸⁸ Ellen Spolsky, “Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post-Structuralism,” *Poetics Today* 23.1(2002): 51.

namely, that people won't "believe his verse in time to come." Since Shakespeare appears to coordinate and stack commonplaces, since he articulates the problem of believability in ways that reference phenomenological experience, we empathize with him, as a writer. The reader senses that Shakespeare was providing (in Spolky's words) "relatively reliable information" that we can use to understand reading, sonnets, language, and, finally, love.

Earlier Criticism of the *Sonnets*

Events within the *Sonnets* indicative of complexity (for example, meta-literary moments, where the writer signals that he knows that he is writing . . . and that he is aware of the constraints of textuality) acted for earlier as an important indicator of what Anne Ferry and others have called a modern consciousness.¹⁸⁹ In his 1968 work *Shakespeare and the Confines of Art*, Philip Edwards put it this way: "Shakespeare is dealing with great complexities of the mind and the heart, on to which is added the driving need of the poet to use his

¹⁸⁹ Anne Ferry, *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983), 3. According to Ferry, Sidney marks the beginning of a modern "consciousness," which for her becomes paradigmatic in Shakespeare's character of Hamlet, especially within the genre of the monologue, or the sense of "internal dialogue" (3).

art, with all its complexities, to make sense of his condition.”¹⁹⁰ This chapter seeks to update and leverage the modernist axiom that Shakespeare is an exemplary self-conscious, “advanced” intellect, capable of accessing new realizations and awareness. As Anne Ferry says, Shakespeare’s speakers are recognizable to us by “the ways in which they analyze what is in their hearts.”¹⁹¹ If Ferry argues that Shakespeare’s literary representations resonate because of a certain way of thinking through affective states, then we might consider her view as related, even if it works as a contrast or a foil, to contemporary views of cognition.¹⁹² I argue that there are rich opportunities for cognitive literary critics to revisit the modes and local readings of earlier critical treatments of the *Sonnets*.

For Stephen Booth, the method of reading is to analyze the “complexity” of Shakespeare’s intertextuality “from which a reader’s sense of straightforward simplicity emerges.”¹⁹³ By being complex, Booth indicates, Shakespeare is being

¹⁹⁰ Philip Edwards, *Shakespeare and the Confines of Art* (London: Barnes and Noble, 1968), 31..

¹⁹¹ Ferry, *The “Inward” Language*, 2.

¹⁹² Ferry’s *The “Inward” Language*, for example, figures Wyatt as a pre-modern poet whose “crude” lyrics foreshadow the more developed verse of Sidney and Shakespeare (75).

¹⁹³ Booth, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, xxii–xxiii.

plain with us about the “uncontrollable” nature of experience, a view that synthesizes the “multitude of meanings” with “vague” and “ambiguous” references.¹⁹⁴ For Helen Vendler, Shakespeare “constructs a self” with a past and present, patterning a psychology, so that “we know” the speaker. Vendler’s more general assumption indicates a logic at the heart of the Shakespearean persona: an ability to maintain a structural integrity that sorts out past from present, that narrates a story, and that, finally, knows that it narrates a story. Or, as Vendler writes on sonnet 30, “When to the sessions of sweet silent thought”:

The overall effect of the sonnet is to make us know the speaker as someone who has undergone many psychological phases—joy, grief, stoicism, loss, renewed grief—over time, and this confers on him a “reality” of prolonged existence which we take on as we speak his words.¹⁹⁵

This analytical mode for Ferry is demonstrated by two texts: the *Sonnets* and *Hamlet*. Ferry distinguishes these texts from others in the Shakespearean corpus, and moreover, she argues that the confessional mode signals the emergence of an articulate self who is distinct from the pre-modern self, especially in contrast to medieval texts or even proto-modern texts earlier in the sixteenth century.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., xii.

¹⁹⁵ Helen Vendler, *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology* (Boston: Harvard UP, 1997), 171–173.

The transition from medieval to Renaissance verse has often been seen, not as a shifting of the human life form, but as a progression from more crude to more advanced verse writing. This progression is seen to have been fulfilled in the flourishing of Elizabethan poetry with Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare. Richard Sylvester notes the eminence of print and the dearth of good poetry between Chaucer and the sixteenth century: "If no great poetry was being written in the 1490s, the means for its wide and rapid dissemination was already at hand."¹⁹⁶ Sylvester compares the later poets of the sixteenth century, such as Marlowe, Spenser, and Shakespeare, who demonstrate the possibilities of the rapidly expanding language, to earlier poets, such as Wyatt and Gascoigne, who are less agile in terms of meter and verbal dexterity.¹⁹⁷ John N. King similarly notes that the critical problem for his study of mid-sixteenth-century Protestant verse is that literary tastes have preferred Spenser and Sidney to the Edwardian

¹⁹⁶ See Richard Sylvester, ed., *English Sixteenth-Century Verse: An Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), xviii.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xxix. Indeed, assessments of Tudor poetry that focused on aesthetic quality were common in the first half of the twentieth century, such as those of Professor Rollins and E. M. W. Tillyard. See Hallett Smith, "The Art of Sir Thomas Wyatt," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 4 (August 1946): 323–355.

poets.¹⁹⁸ That is, the Edwardian poets (writing during Edward VI's reign), have often been ignored because they have been measured against the perceived literary value of later poets. It is important to note that formal complexity or literary self-consciousness (which perhaps may even be associated with some sort of evolution of intellectual capacity) might be a very biased and problematic position that ignores other kinds of literary traditions.

The Invention of the Brain as the Source of Language Production

Sonnet 108 connects the mind's role in the production of romantic language, arguing that new words for romantic expression would originate—if there were sufficient material for it—in the brain. “Neurocentric” views¹⁹⁹ might view the way that the brain acts centrally as a source of mental and physical activity, and even involuntary activity. However, the word “brain” for Shakespeare would have had a more specialized meaning. He would have understood the term to indicate more exclusively the locus of study (the cranium or the

¹⁹⁸ John N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP): 1982.

¹⁹⁹ Christine A. Skarda, “The Perceptual Form of Life,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6.11–12 (1999): 79–93. “The new model rejects neurocentrism, the view that neural activity alone contributes to the percept” (83).

cerebrum).²⁰⁰ Since the Middle Ages, the term “brain” had also been part of words denoting mental illness, as in the word “brainsicke,” meaning “madde,” with the word “brainless” meaning “foolish” or “lacking intelligence.”²⁰¹ The late sixteenth-century meaning, therefore, generally associated the brain with intellectual health and ability. I have discovered that Shakespeare seems to offer one of the first uses of the word “brain” to directly associate the brain with language output.

While sonnet 108 claims that there is nothing “ink may character,” sonnet 122 teases out the way that the physical writing down of thoughts of love contrasts with the experience of love itself.

²⁰⁰ For sixteenth century references to brain as cranium or cerebrum, see “Brain” *Lexicons of Early Modern English*, ed. Ian Lancashire (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Library and University of Toronto Press, 2006), accessed 30 August 2011, <leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicon/entry.cfm?ent=268-2120>.

²⁰¹ For “brainsicke” as meaning “madde,” see *Lexicons of Early Modern English*, ed. Ian Lancashire (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Library and University of Toronto Press, 2006), <leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicon/entry.cfm?ent=137-1136>, accessed 30 August 2011. See also “brainless” (adj.), *OED Third edition* (June 2011), accessed 30 August 2011.

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full charactered with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain
Beyond all date, even to eternity;
Or at the lest, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist;
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be missed.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more;
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import forgetfulness in me.

The idea of tables (or writing-tablets)²⁰² is the primary metaphor in a poem that discursively moves between the speaker's remembering or forgetting, and the role of writing in both scenarios. The speaker first claims that his brain holds within itself the memory of the youth. However, while the first quatrain appeals to "lasting memory," Shakespeare appeals alternatively to "eternity." The memory would exist with the speaker's physical body: "so long as brain and heart / Have faculty by nature to subsist." Poetry, indeed the artifact of the individual poem, is represented as an alternative to embodied human memory, a repeated claim in the sequence. Written text, as the commonplace goes, could preserve the youth,

²⁰² Duncan-Jones writes that this most likely means a "table book" or "pocket notebook" in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 354. Colin Burrow glosses the word tables as a "commonplace book containing compositions" in *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, 624.

but the living memory of the speaker had its own essential qualities to which the text could not compare.

In sonnet 122, the poem is an “adjunct,” those “tables”; it is a “record” of the fair youth. But the sonnet also confuses the brain’s status as natural memory with the written record. The first line where the speaker claims to have internalized those tables begins the confusion. How is the brain different from a text? Could the brain compete with the written record? Are the brain and the written text at odds, or are they seamlessly integrated so that we don’t know the difference? The transitive verbs of the sonnet indicate a movement between the fair youth outside the speaker’s body; the inner self of the speaker, represented by both his brain and body. The verbs “receive,” “give,” “import,” “hold,” and “trust” indicate exchange between the perception and memory, between text and body. The confusion appears to be a result, finally, of the sonnet sequence itself, which in simulating love and maintaining the focus on romantic affection, poem after poem, confuses the boundaries between not just text and world, but also text and the brain. The poignant claim of the sonnet is that writing down the experience of loving the youth is never the same as the experience itself, and while it preserves memory, it also degrades it. The paradox is that memory also degrades without the technology of writing. The prevailing truth, therefore, is about the enduring fact of loss.

The Brain, Trauma, and Perception

In the poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, there are three important places where the activity of the brain is posed as anathema to perceptual experience.²⁰³ The first instance is when Lucrece awakes in horror to Tarquin in her bedroom. The poem describes her emergence from sleep to the disorienting reality of a shadowy intruder: “Such shadows are the weak brain’s forgeries” (L. 460). Immediately after the instance of rape, moreover, Lucrece’s mind again rebels against Tarquin’s violation of her bodily and moral integrity, describing the retreat of her mind and spirit from the breast (or from the physical center).

She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,
And bids it leap from thence, where it may find
Some purer chest to close so pure a mind,
Frantic with grief thus breathes she forth her spite,
Against the unseen secrecy of night.
(Ll. 757–63)

This description of a mind retreating from public engagement and rebelling against the violent impurity of the outside world seeks to find an alternative psychological space. Finally, the mind is again cast as a “chest” or “closet,” a private space of female intimacy. The binary has to do with a male body with violent intention invading that space. Later in the poem, the narrative comments

²⁰³ See Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999).

on the disruption of Lucrece's body with an insistence on a mind that has been preserved (through madness) in a pure state.

Immaculate and spotless is my mind;
That was not forced, that never was inclined
To accessary yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poisoned closet yet endure.
(Ll. 1653–9)

There are relatively few meta-literary references in *The Rape of Lucrece*, with one of the main references being that the sign of the intruder in her bedroom is cast in terms of a degraded text created by the brain: Lucrece says, "Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries" (L. 460). Lucrece says "Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries" (L. 460). Lucrece does not trust her own perception of the invasion of her private space, and says that her brain is tricking her. It is interesting that Lucrece speaks of the brain in a depersonalized manner, and that she creates an antagonistic sense, separating what she believes from her brain is communicating. Moreover, Lucrece's mention of the word "brain" at the onset of violence to her body (and the devaluation of her brain power with the use of the word "weak") begins to create a picture of gender and violence against women in the Renaissance. We might see how the brain, misogyny, and sexually charged violence intersect in this chilling reference, as Lucrece tries not to realize (does not want to accept in her mind) the unfolding of the violent narrative. Finally, the OED defines "forgery" as "the making of a thing in fraudulent imitation of something; also, *esp.* the forging, counterfeiting, or

falsifying of a document. Considering this definition of "forgery, Lucrece's reference to "brain's forgeries" intersects with discourses about the degradation of textual authenticity. Thus, the "brain" of the heroine Lucrece is potentially an expression of larger schematics of ideology related to print culture, literacy, and textuality in the period.²⁰⁴

The Sonnet as Brain

All meaningful artifacts, of whatever type—written texts, yes, but also physical specimens, instrument readings, photographs, models of all kinds—possess at least a minimal structural complexity and use signifying elements in ways that are conventional and thus formalized. This notion of form is not a static architecture or an immanent, closed idea: It is a constantly renewing, relational network.

—Henry S. Turner²⁰⁵

In his definition (or redefinition) of form, Turner expands what we can say about Renaissance genres and textual formats. Turner emphasizes the “minimal

²⁰⁴ Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender*, 7. Wall writes that cultural expressions of [the problem of the publication] relied on women as *tropes*” (emphasis in original). See in the OED definition of "forgery," especially 1594 Shakespeare *Lucrece* sig. G3, Guilty of treason, forgerie, and shift."forgery, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 2 May 2013.

²⁰⁵ Henry S. Turner, “Lessons from Literature for the History of Science (and Vice Versa): Reflections on Form,” *Isis* 101(2010): 582.

structural complexity” of cultural artifacts, meaning that when we confront a cultural artifact, we are not working with a simple, linear system, but a set of constituent parts: parts that can be interchanged and intermixed to change the “meaning” and to alter relationships. In a sense, therefore, the form of drama is not a set of conventions (not a list of formal properties), and not even a history of textual influences. Rather, form indicates a living relationship, a “network” within a larger cultural process.

Finally, it is the most emergent definition of “embodiment” that is shifting our understanding of texts and other memory technologies in radical ways. It is a new understanding that upends social determinism, even as it radicalizes the notion of ecology. These new definitions of embodiment describe how technology networks and becomes co-joined with the human form. The networking of human and nonhuman bodies has become important in theories related to computing and digital technology.²⁰⁶ As N. Katherine Hayles writes in *How We Think: Digital*

²⁰⁶ In *Embodiment in Cognition and Culture*, John Michael Krois explains that “The point is not simply that something natural—the human body as a biological organism—influences the attainment of knowledge, but that the specific character of knowledge is a function of the knower’s particular embodiment” (xv). Bodies are a robust site of cultural knowledge, Krois claims, and the specificity of each body influences how knowledge is attained or purveyed.

Media and Contemporary Technogenesis, “Embodiment [. . .] takes the form of extended cognition, in which human agency and thought are enmeshed within larger networks that extend beyond the desktop computer into the environment.”²⁰⁷ Hayles uses the term “technogenesis” to propose the way that we have been (and are being) shaped by Internet cultures, mobile devices, and social media. In this view, technogenesis means “adaptation, the fit between organisms and their environments, recognizing that both sides of the engagement (humans and technologies) are undergoing coordinated transformations.”²⁰⁸

Regarding tool use, Lambros Malafouris has put this another way: “We have a plastic mind which is embedded and inextricably enfolded within a *plastic culture*.”²⁰⁹ “In short,” he writes, “culture shapes our brains and extends our

²⁰⁷ Hayles, *How We Think*, 3: “Our interactions with digital media are embodied, and they have bodily effects at the physical level. Similarly, the actions of computers are embodied, although in a very different level than humans.”

²⁰⁸ Hayles, *How We Think*, 81.

²⁰⁹ For work on the ways that interfaces affect embodied mind, see Lambros Malafouris, “The Brain-Artifact Interface (BAI): A Challenge for Archaeology and Cultural Neuroscience,” *SCAN* 5(2010): 268.

minds.”²¹⁰ The idea of technogenesis is that tools, especially complex tools of memory, actually can change the way we experience and enact lifeways.

Embodiment, then, is a way of articulating the following key assumptions:

1. Humans and nonhumans have distinct embodiments, but share some aspects of embodiment.
2. Technological objects act as prostheses, or add-ons, for/to human embodiment, often becoming imbricated into the human life form.
3. The embodiments of tools and humans can mutually impact each other in radical ways.

Recent work to integrate archaeology and cultural neuroscience indicates that the mind is changed by technologies of all kinds, with the brain residing across the categories of tool and body. As Lambros Malafouris writes, “The human brain for some million years now, is an extremely plastic, profoundly embodied, materially engaged and culturally situated bio-psycho-social artefact.”²¹¹ Also, Malafouris writes, “the term BAI is introduced to denote in particular the kind of technological mediations (material structures, processes, objects, or other socio-material apparatuses and practices) that enable the

²¹⁰ Ibid., 270.

²¹¹ Malafouris, “The Brain-Artefact Interface (BAI),” 264.

configuration of a dynamic alignment or tuning between neural and cultural plasticity.” In particular, Malafouris demonstrates the role of tools, or “Brain-Artefact Interfaces” (BAIs), in forming cultural brains. Malafouris writes about “enactive prosthetic enhancement” or how “BAIs enable the mind to make maximal use and/or transform the structure of information in the environment in ways that would have been impossible for the naked organism to achieve.”²¹²

Technogenesis and the Sonnets

Andy Clark writes that “human minds and bodies are essentially open to episodes of deep and transformative restructuring in which new equipment (both physical and ‘mental’ can become quite literally incorporated into the thinking and acting systems that we identify as our minds and bodies.”²¹³ Shakespeare’s sonnets provide evidence that the sonnet as a form, and the practice of sonnet sequences, contributed to the deep experience of cognitive fatigue. With all of the possibilities of the sequence, which help the writer pass along rich, intertextual information, the sonnet also transforms the embodied system. The way it changes the body is by involving the brain in an intensive, sequential experience of continued conceptual work. By gaining the attention of the subject (poet and/or

²¹² Ibid., 265

²¹³ Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment Action and Cognitive Extension* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011), 31.

reader), the serial poem transforms schemas of word meanings, attitudes, and especially ideas of the writing process, or invention. Finally, by conflating these schemas with erotic content, these ideas become connected to primary erotic experiences.

Shakespeare's discourse about the mind and romantic attachment mediate between nonhuman and human, between the sub-personal and the person, between the inscription of the brain and technological object. In other words, the proliferation and distribution of sonnets for both elite and middle-class subjects in the Elizabethan period was a way to make meaning within a new spectrum of objects, and a new range of spaces. In a time when readers could purchase a "slim," "unintimidating" 5-to-7-inches portable quarto format, such as the one that held Shakespeare's 154 poems,²¹⁴ in a time when enterprising Renaissance subjects understood that poetry could garner social mobility and create financial assets, the sonnet was a site for understanding both social and technological aspects. The sonnet, moreover, could serve as motivation for aesthetic and poetic decision-making during a time of cultural change.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Dymphna Callaghan, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

²¹⁵ In the introduction to *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, Burrow notes that Shakespeare's earlier poetry was "primarily a contribution to an English

genre [of taking an Ovidian tale and translating/expanding it into a longer narrative verse] that had two distinct features: It was a form adopted by young men [associated with theatre]; and it was a form which those young male poets used to display their talents to a wide audience in print” (16–17).

Chapter 5:

“To the Wide World”:

Gesture, Movement, and the Scandal of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*

It is difficult to overestimate “how far the body, the reader’s sensorium, has traditionally been kept from the field of literary concern.”

—Charles Frey²¹⁶

From early in the sonnet sequence, Shakespeare proposes that the mind, or the speaker’s thoughts, can best be understood as physical movements. Shakespeare signifies cognition not only through ideas of motion, however, but also through ideas of stasis. The faithful, constant mind is a mind that stayed in the same place. In sonnet 25, a constant mind is a moral and psychological ideal; the speaker’s utmost desire is to be “Happy I, that love and am beloved / Where I may not remove, nor be removed.” The idealization of mental devotion becomes iconic in one of the most famous sonnets: number 116, “Let not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments.” Shakespeare represents the lovers as “minds” who stay faithful, “alter[ing] not” across time and events.

The center of gravity in sonnet 116 is the nominative claim abstracting love as an “ever-fixed mark.”²¹⁷ In other words, the lovers’ minds are one, as an

²¹⁶ Charles Frey, *Making Sense of Shakespeare* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999), 11.

“ever-fixed mark.” The resonance of 116 across the centuries is attested to by the poem’s popular reception, its reprintings, and its representations in derivative works. Consider, finally, sonnet 116’s ending couplet, where the speaker represents unchanging love (mind) as a manifesto, and swears upon his vocation as a writer, “If this be error and upon me proved / I never writ, nor no man ever loved.”²¹⁸ The ethos of the speaker is brokered on the axiom that love should remain unchanged, unmoved, and constant.

Across the longer, sustained discourses of the sonnet sequence, sonnet 116 is contradicted. If we view the sonnets as a set, we can see that the sequence alternates between the positive valuation of mental stasis (the focus or “fixed” thoughts of one lover) and representations of the mind in motion, where thoughts continually shift, “removing” from one object to attend to another, whether that object be human or nonhuman. The speaker’s desire for constancy

²¹⁷ Quotations from Shakespeare’s sonnets and *A Lover’s Complaint* are taken from *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (London: Arden, 1998).

²¹⁸ Sonnet 116 develops sonnet 115, which argued for focusing on the love-object despite the force of time, which would “divert strong minds to th’ course of alt’ring things.” Shakespeare’s representations of spatial concepts shed light on the biological drive to love and its impact on the mind.

often manifests as a critique of the opposite: love attachment that strays, or moves. At times, this preoccupation is expressed through a misogynist gender binary, like that of sonnet 20, which implores the fair youth not to be like courtly ladies in changing one's love attachment: "shifting change, as is false women's fashion." Indeed, the idea of shifting is often gendered female in the Western canon, and thus the metaphors of movement are underscored by sexual politics.

The gendering of movement might be a way to reconcile, finally, a point of departure between my cognitive reading of the sonnets, and the legacy of reading the sexual politics of Shakespeare. Reading content related to cognition and movement departs from the most enduring hermeneutic used to judge the sequence: encountering the matrix of sexual relations between the figures of the fair youth, the dark lady, and the speaker/poet. Discussions have highlighted the subtexts of desire between the three figures, deconstructing homoeroticism, gender, and race in the sonnets. These treatments have politicized the erotic meaning of the sonnets and thus contributed to our understanding of the ethics of reading Shakespeare.

However, if this emphasis has led to our neglect of Shakespeare's themes of mind, perhaps we can identify a meaningful structural silence, and the underlying assumptions creating that silence in literary studies.²¹⁹ By putting a

²¹⁹ For ideas of structural silences, see Scala, *Absent Narratives*, xiv.

cognitive reading into dialogue with the sex-based readings of the sonnets, we can start to postulate how cognitive discovery might open up some new discussions.

As a Renaissance poetry scholar with an interest in the embodiments of reading and writing, I am curious whether a cognitive approach might help us to think more broadly about a particular literary form: the Renaissance sonnet. This chapter will identify complex directions of movement in the sequence, and will demonstrate how Shakespeare aligns these motifs of movement with concepts of the mind, or poetic imagination. My focus on gesture and spatial reasoning connects to new discoveries in the brain-based sciences, which have recently been adapted to literature. Neurocriticism²²⁰ has begun to assert the ways that literary texts—even the most inter-textual texts with the most self-referential discourses—have a relationship with the perceptual world.

In particular, literary critics have begun to identify what is called “kinesic intelligence” in literary texts.²²¹ Literary arts not only engage ideology but activate

²²⁰ For a range of recent methods and discoveries in literary neurocriticism, see *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010).

²²¹ Guillemette Bolens, *The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2012), 19.

the reader's sensory body. New discoveries in the fields of neuroscience, the neurobiology of attachment, and aesthetic psychology generate insights into what is happening when we read about staying or leaving; being fixed in place; walking, or waving, or bowing; or when we read a genital pun. Our bodies are activated when we read references to embodied schemas. Our bodies, moreover, are not activated figuratively or imaginatively. As I will present in later sections, our neurons fire in ways that embody what we read as part of a lived experience.

In *Making Sense of Shakespeare*, Charles Frey writes about a divorce between the embodiment of literary texts, and literary criticism that fails to account for affect and the body. Frey writes,

The divorce has continued not only in criticisms based upon knowledge or its impossibility (such as rationalist, skeptic, or deconstructive approaches) and upon social energy or power (such as New Historicist, cultural materialist, or feminist approaches) but also in reader response criticism [. . .] while the psychobiology of aesthetic experience has been investigated at least tentatively. (11)

Canonical methods of inquiry in Renaissance studies, Frey argues, often keep us from fully exploring the body's interaction with text. Frey outlines the ways Shakespeare criticism has broadly kept us within rationalist and historicist discourses, discourses that do not fully account for the experience of the reading body.

Heeding Frey's call for more attention to literary embodiments, this chapter will identify Shakespeare's strategic descriptions of gesture, movement, and spatial awareness. Another title for this chapter might be "The motor rules of Shakespeare's sonnets." Readers will soon recognize salient motifs they have read before in the sequence. By comparing aesthetic experience to perceptual experience, we can respond to what Frey calls the "sensorium of the reader."

Importantly, the sonnets almost always put perceptual experience in relationship to amatory modes. Despite this erotic focus, I will delay treating sexual difference, which becomes integrated in the final section of the essay and which can certainly be read out of sequence with an immediate concern for answering the questions of gender. Feminist and queer readings of Shakespeare's sonnets (to which I consider this chapter a contribution) serve a vital function. These readings maintain that the invention of heterosexual relations can be seen as flexible across time, relations that are more static now than in the sixteenth century. When we teach Shakespeare the poet to our students, we understand him as someone who depicted the complexity (and multiple forms) of sex. This complexity is less well recognized in our current cultural milieu, where conservative sexual politics are often still formative of economic and social relations.

Related to this lesson, the postcolonial lessons of the "scandalized" sonnets are also vital, helping to reveal a xenophobic core within the discourses

of Western sexuality from early modernity forward. Unwise as it would be to neglect sexual politics in lyrics that are explicitly erotic, and much as we wish to retain the political charge that electrifies and transforms our view of the sonnets, perhaps it is possible to extend the conversation to the mental processes of Shakespeare's poetry. If the hermeneutics of scandal limit what we can say about Renaissance texts and the body (as critics such as Graham Hammill have argued),²²² a focus on sonnets as a cognitive technology might open up the conversation to have wider implications.

What if these erotic tropes of motion, as much as they tell us about intimate relations, are simultaneously demonstrating the dynamics of the brain? And what if decoding these dynamics reveals how Renaissance culture mobilized

²²² Graham Hammill critiques the vexed procedures where contemporary readers 'scandalize' historical texts and thus limit our view of them. "Recent scholarship has more than demonstrated that the idealization of heterosexuality is a product of Victorian and cold war habits that reveals more about the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than about the sixteenth or seventeenth," Hammill writes. "However, more is at stake for psychoanalysis in the concept of sexuality than showing the supposed norm to be in fact defined by the deviant." Graham Hammill, "Psychoanalysis and Sexuality," *Shakespeare Studies*, 33(2005): 78.

sexual politics into the brain and body? As George Lakoff remarks in his 2008 speech “Framing, Metaphors, and Your Brain,” the framing mechanisms in language that route our behavior are “thoroughly political.”²²³ That is, we might begin to see that social inscription does not happen in central or core imageries, such as the focus on genital puns that have captured the attention of scholars. Rather, it is the framing devices (as Lakoff argues) that we need to pay attention to: the broader network of socially cathected movements.

Romantic Attachment and the Spatial Sense

Some sonnets (we might call them static poems) describe a wish for transcendent, absolute fixedness in romance, while other sonnets (we might call them mobile poems) describe an experience of ongoing movement towards the love-object. Similar to how sonnet 116 idealizes a fixed mark, sonnet 27 illustrates romantic memory as a constantly moving body. Sonnet 27 says thinking of the loved one at night is like a pilgrimage. “And then begins a journey

²²³ See George Lakoff, “George Lakoff on the Political Mind,” *Commonwealth Club* (San Francisco, CA), <http://fora.tv/2008/06/20/George_Lakoff_on_The_Political_Mind>: “Metaphors are physical. They are part of your physical brain.”

in my head” says the sonnet, “To work my mind, when body’s work’s expired.”²²⁴

The speaker’s “thoughts” are the “pilgrim” with the beloved functioning as the holy site or relic (“a jewel hung in ghastly night”). Mental activity in sonnet 27 is a tortured, psychically exhausting nighttime “journey.”

Other poems signify what it is like for the beloved to move away from the speaker. In sonnet 147, the speaker classifies movement in the contemporary terminologies of sixteenth-century pharmaceutics: “My reason, the physician to my love, / Angry that his prescriptions are not kept, / Hath left me.” In the pharmacist metaphor, it is good judgment (“reason”) that has left the body altogether to suffer “fever” and madness: “My thoughts and my discourse as madmen’s are.”²²⁵ Love is therefore either the pain of moving towards a (unreachable) love object, or it is the pain of being left (by the beloved, and/or the mind). It is remarkable that the poems above explicitly engage ideas of the mind.

²²⁴ The mind resists the speaker’s physical need for rest in sonnet 27, and thus the religious analogy is not comforting but vexing: “Lo, thus by day my limbs, by night my mind / For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.” Sonnet 28 continues the theme of being unable to rest, characterizing the force that keeps him up at night as “grief,” an emotional force that causes his insomnia.

²²⁵ See chapter 3 of this dissertation for an account of pharmaceutical references in sixteenth-century English Calvinism.

That is, romance is being used to explore cognition, and cognition romance. Mind or thoughts are integrally involved with the visceral experience of desire, and the recall of the beloved.

Kinesic Intelligence and the Poetics of Space

It is arguable that by connecting romance and movement Shakespeare's sonnets engage what Barbara Stafford calls "a first-order sensation of the body as being-in-the-world." According to Stafford, we get our very sense of being through "spatiotemporal phenomenological conditions," conditions that are most often predictable, learned through cognitive development, leading to successful interactions with the physical world.²²⁶ Stafford's reading is not essentialist. By denoting that these physical interactions are learned, by noting the relationship between cognitive development and world, Stafford demonstrates the learned

²²⁶ Barbara Maria Stafford, *Echo Objects: The Cognitive Work of Images* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007), 130. In this section, Stafford is referring to this sense to explain how contemporary artists, such as James Turrell, use light installations to create optical illusions, altering spatiotemporal references for the museum visitor. "By using an illusion (an apparent geometric form) to dissociate the perceived image (the percept) from the real image (the stimulus or actual input from a video project), Turrell lets us see the ambiguities in how the primary sensory cortex represents visual images" (130).

(not entirely natural) aspect of our interactions. Moreover, in *Echo Objects: The Cognitive Work of Images*, Stafford focuses on contemporary conceptual artists, who manipulate visual perception as a way to intervene (and comment on) on the constructs of perception. Can we assess whether Shakespeare was similarly intervening on the constructs of perception? Is he twisting “spatio-temporal conditions” to alter our sense of text, perception, and world?

Literary scholars have similarly begun to denote how perception works within literary texts. Guillemete Bolens, like Stafford, describes a learning curve, where we learn how to interact with the physical world. Bolens calls it “kinesic intelligence.” In *The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative*, Bolens explains:

Kinesic intelligence in literature is that faculty that enables us to produce and use perceptual simulations in order to understand narrated movements and gestures. Kinesic intelligence is grounded in motor rules and internal models, which are central to what is often synthesized in a phrase “body schema.”

Importantly, Bolens connects the way that a literary text simulates physical experiences and grounds literary structures in “motor rules.” Bolens connects body, text, brain and world in a matrix of structural relations, or a set of knowledge, that depends on “movements and gestures.”²²⁷

²²⁷ Guillemette Bolens, *The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2012), 19.

While Bolens is a literary critic, her work connects literature to important new scientific data. Recent cognitive data confirm that “conceptual knowledge is embodied, that is, it is mapped within our sensory motor system. [. . .] *Imagining and doing use a shared neural substrate*” (emphasis in original).²²⁸ According to Vittorio Gallese and George Lakoff, the concept of grasping, for example, is directly tied to the experience of physically grasping. Or, as Gallese and Lakoff write, “Language makes direct use of the same brain structures used in perception and action.” Also, they note that “Grammar resides in the neural connections between concepts and their expression via phonology. That is, grammar is constituted by the connections between conceptual schemas and phonological schemas.”²²⁹

In the view of cognitive linguistics, therefore, Shakespeare’s tropes of romantic love are connecting to neural substrates where we experience motion: the feeling of gravity, of staying still, or the forces of changing places. Understanding the neural basis of our experience might change how we see Shakespeare’s motifs of travel, for example. Sonnets 50 and 51 portray the

²²⁸ Vittorio Gallese and George Lakoff, “The Brain’s Concepts: The Role of the Sensory-Motor System in Conceptual Knowledge,” *Cognitive Neuropsychology* 21.0 (2005): 10.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

affective experience of love's absence as increasing physical movement away from the beloved, translating into the terms of a literal journey. In sonnet 50, there is the the "plodding," "heavy," weighed-down movement with neither the beast nor the rider desiring "speed." Sonnet 51 highlights this beleaguered movement of the speaker's "dull bearer" as a paradox: "In winged speed, no motion shall I know; / Then can no horse with my desire keep pace." Importantly, these motifs not only require knowledge of a human body, but a sense of a series of objects with references to moving animal bodies in space. In short, there is multi-modality, and moreover, the perverse sense that these moving bodies are either thwarted or anathema to their movements.

Why are these motifs of space so important? Our sense of spatial awareness determines our connection to the objects and people around us, determining whether or how we will attempt to interact with them. Patrick Colm Hogan explains this phenomenon as the subjectivity that is formed between an agent and the outside world:

Standard neurocognitive architecture includes two sorts of spatial organization. One sort is objective and based on the hippocampus. This maps the relations of objects to one another independent of one's own location. The other is egocentric and is connected most importantly with the superior parietal lobule. This keeps track of one's spatial relation to the rest of the world [and] the likelihood of

for a given emotion is sharply increased by the location of triggering conditions within that critical stage.²³⁰

As Hogan goes on to explain, locative motifs connect closely with action-oriented segments of the brain. That is, our sense of how the body is located in space helps decide whether we bend down to get a drink of water at a stream, or whether we think the bank is too steep, and wait for a safer point of entry. Our emotions help to guide us to decision-making, guiding us through spaces, objects, and engagements.

If we are beginning to apply the science of perception to literary representations of perception, how does this compare to what Renaissance poets understood? The next section will test these new developments of cognitive studies against a historical sense of how poets understood motion and gesture. It is interesting that the connections between mental and physical events argued by contemporary scientists are at times consistent with poetic traditions from the early modern period, since movement was a long-standing convention of love poetry. It is also interesting that Renaissance ideas of motion are meant to be abstract, are consciously metaphorized. In short, a Renaissance sense challenges “kinesic intelligence.” Renaissance writers were drawing on these

²³⁰ Patrick Colm Hogan, “On Being Moved: Cognition and Emotion in Literature and Film,” *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010), 237–256.

spatial and “kinesic” senses, and it appears they were doing so consciously.

Moreover, poetic texts seem to indicate that physical perception and movement were distinct phenomena, aspects that could be differentiated from the technologies of writing.

The Renaissance Will: Return, Attraction, and Memory

Representations of love as a sort of virtual movement were the essence of the Western view of mind, in which the moral will was made whole by a focus on a transcendent, abstracted other. Petrarch’s sonnet sequence, for example, is a movement in language, a language that mimics or embeds a sense of physical movement. In his edition of Petrarch’s lyric poems, Robert M. Durling notes:

Under the right conditions, just as in perception the mind—the imagination—assumes the form of a lady as mental image, so the will assumes her form as its goal; when the two coincide, the image of the lady is always before the mind’s eye, the will always moves toward her.²³¹

Continental love poetry exalted motion towards the love-object, Durling says, such as in Petrarch’s return again and again to the figure of Laura. In Durling’s terms, this return to a mental object was analogous to perceptual

²³¹ Robert M. Durling, trans. and ed., *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1976): 18.

experience of sexual attraction and gratification in that it had the “goal” of the “form of a lady.”²³²

If we compare the Petrarchan schema to the science of perception, this traditional understanding of the Petrarchan mode can be seen as contrastive to contemporary models. Compared to the physical gratification of sex, the mental attention given to the romantic love-object in Petrarch’s and Shakespeare’s sonnets is often just as salient. But mental attention was different in form, and it was understood by Renaissance writers to be an abstraction, or spiritual practice. That is, for the Renaissance writer and reader, this movement was not at all the equivalent of physical action.

The science of perception insists on a continuum between physical experience and the literary simulation of physical experience. The brain is activated in some of the same core ways in both literature and lived experience. In contrast, descriptions of movement in Renaissance poetry insist on more differentiation between the amatory literatures and perception. The sequence (such as Petrarch’s sequence) develops a strong differentiation between the two.

In the sixteenth century in England, some poets did theorize, however, that perhaps poetry and experience were interconnected. Sir Philip Sidney addressed the idea of movement, giving imaginative work more autonomy. He

²³² Ibid.

argued that poetic language could bring forth our literal actions. When Sidney referred to “moving” as part of institutional learning in *The Defense of Poetry*, he argued that poetry is superior to philosophy because of its ability to move the reader. “For who will be taught,” Sidney said, “if he be not moved with desire to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching bring forth [. . .] as that it moveth one to do that which it doth teach?”²³³ Reading poems will bring about virtuous action, Sidney argued, inspiring the reader to enact what is read. Sidney based his argument on a Greek work by Heliodorus, which he saw as an exemplar of this kind of virtuous moving. Sidney’s own love sonnets in *Astrophil and Stella*, as well, indicate continuity with a perpetual object of sexual desire that motivates ongoing devotion and poetic activity.²³⁴

Ultimately, our contemporary interpretations of literature do not correlate exactly with the new discoveries in the neurosciences. Sidney posited that poetry had the potential to spur virtuous action (words manifesting as outward deeds), but it is important to recall that the action he mentions is really a matter of

²³³ Sir Philip Sidney, “The Defence of Poetry” in *Sir Philip Sidney: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989), 226.

²³⁴ Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979): 17.

“virtue.” That is, Sidney meant a social or civic sense of action, not a physicalist sense of action. It is significant that early moderns described and hypothesized these ideas of movement. But it is clear that Renaissance writers did not intend to posit a one-to-one correlation between the body’s movements and the movements of the mind.

To conclude this section, therefore, we will pose the question again in the terms offered by Crane and Richardson: just how did Shakespeare and his contemporaries “imagine, understand, and represent (their) own cognitive processes”?

- Shakespeare imagined his cognitive process through spatial and gestural concepts, metaphors dependent on such common physical experiences as the orientation of the sun’s movement, opening and locking a chest, riding a horse, or bowing.
- Shakespeare is commenting on the difference between perception and physical movement, and the sense of movement’s being simulated in the text.
- Sonnets, such as Petrarch’s, use the idea of return in an imaginative sense, related to romantic memory.
- Renaissance writers thought about the relationship between poetry and movement, although their understanding was more abstract than current understandings.

Movement and Shakespeare's Poetry

When it comes to the discourses of movement in Shakespeare's sonnets, moreover, we are encountering something distinct. Shakespeare's paradoxes of movement illustrate cognitive processes connected to poetry: that is, the tropes of movement connect to literary phenomena. Movement illustrates not just what it feels like to focus on a love-object, but also what it feels like to focus on reading or writing.

Consider how Shakespeare created the idea of the living memory of text, such as the trope of the "vaunting" plant in sonnet 18. The speaker argues that the fair youth has a limited period of "increase," part of the sequence's refrain that embodied existence is fleeting. In the last line, the speaker claims that the poem "engrafts" the youth anew, transplanting the youth—rooting the idea of him—into a text. Shakespeare asserts that the self, when abstracted in poetry, can survive the material world where plants, animals, and humans decay. "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see," Shakespeare writes, "So long lives this, and this gives life to thee." Similarly, sonnet 19 promises, "My love shall in my verse ever live young." The movement of the plant, its upward growth toward the sky, is made into a perpetual motion. In verse, the "vaunting" observed in the natural world is preserved as a trope.

When he talks about thought as movement (or memory as movement), Shakespeare's distinct contribution is a connection to textuality. In the few rare

sonnets where the speaker admits to moving away from the fair youth, he justifies his absence, as in sonnet 109, by the claiming his soul lives inside the fair youth: “If I have ranged / Like him that travels I return again.” In the self-deprecating language of the next sonnet, 110, the speaker critiques his own romantic wandering as having detrimental effects on his mind: “I have gone here and there [. . .] gored my own thoughts.” The speaker renews and intensifies his mental focus on the youth in sonnet 110, despite past romantic foibles. The ability to focus means there is such a thing as not paying attention; committing to one idea (interpersonal or literary) means rejecting others; selecting one object in the act of representation means the exclusion of other objects: deferred, lost, forgotten, or rejected.²³⁵ I argue that Shakespeare’s ideas of attention are focused around ideas of textual attention. The point is not necessarily to talk about perception.

²³⁵ The fact that Shakespeare explores themes of mental attention becomes more acute when considering Duncan-Jones’s claim that by the 1609 printing, the market for sonnets had been surfeited. Duncan-Jones, “Introduction,” 3: “Judging by the extreme scarcity of surviving copies of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, Jaggard’s little venture had done vexingly well, and it may have seemed for the time being to have spoiled the market for authentic ‘sugred Sonnets’ [sic] by Shakespeare.”

But yet, perhaps, contemporary neuroscience can help us deepen our understanding of why beautiful poems maintain a hold on our imagination. Western lyric at once activates sensory experience, while insisting on the abstraction of the textual moment. This is the paradox of reading; the reader is engaged with the body, while awareness of the relatively mental nature of this engagement fluctuates and flickers in and out. It is like swimming in a lake with fish nibbling on the subject intermittently beneath the water. While reading a poem (or an immersive set of poems), readers enjoy having their attention focused on the text at hand while virtually forgetting the body. This is like the swimmer who enjoys having her head above the water's surface. But there is the intermittent knowledge about what the swimmer's "submerged" body is experiencing, which adds another layer of excitement. That excitement, that splitting of experience, is the attention practice of a poem, or maybe even of a novel, or a song, or a television sitcom. We can look at this, finally, as how sequences (or series of poems) view the world. Sonnets see the world as an experience in order to both simulate and repress simultaneously, splitting conscious attention, across time, again and again, and to use that split consciousness to enact new ideas to intertwine with reality.

Shakespeare approached cognition as a writer; for him as for other Renaissance writers, the mind and reason for being were part of an epistemology deeply connected to Renaissance literacy. Even while he demonstrated mastery

over these modes of literacy, Shakespeare yet left a space for some kind of magic, a deferral of causal links between the soul and brain, the beloved and Eternal Love itself.

In thy soul's thought (all naked) will bestow it,
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points me on graciously with fair respect.
—Sonnet 26

Sonnet 26 represents movement within the larger cosmos, gauging location in the terms of the stars: The sonnet layers abstract concepts (soul, thought, and stars), which can be seen as deferring the ultimate source of erotic passion and mental movement.²³⁶ Moreover, within the phrase “thoughts (all naked),” the parenthetical description “all naked” serves as a meta-cognitive conceit to describe unadulterated “thoughts.” Stephen Booth refers to the bawdy, sexual meanings implied by the word “conceit” (because of the word’s beginning with con-), which links to the words “head,” “wit,” etc. Booth suggests “all naked” may potentially be a pun meaning “with penis bared.”²³⁷ The reference embeds a reminder of sexual desire, the physiological force that is yet another potential source of the poem’s backstory, and potentially its ultimate point of origin. But

²³⁶ Thought’s being “naked” is a clever conceit; however, the descriptor “soul” for thought amplifies this concept, layering it with a Platonic or Christian schema.

²³⁷ Stephen Booth, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 176–7.

what is naked? The soul's thought. Shakespeare leaves us to wonder whether the speaker's intense focus on the love-object is dictated by the youth's attributes, or by some deeper cognitive function. Maybe the speaker is moved by mythic cosmographical forces ("whatsoever star that guides my moving"). The reader is left without clear understanding as to what moves the mind and body. While the experience of sexual desire is a reference point, it is arguable that the poem is not solely about sex but about "thoughts." It would be problematic to deny sexual power as a formative schematic in the sequence. But the poems are about literary output and activity as well. In that sense, poems are the work of "thoughts," as much as they are the "conceits" of desire.

Repeatedly in his series of sonnets published in 1609, Shakespeare entertains Renaissance views of the mind. It seems to me that Shakespeare proposes rhetorically powerful views of mind across the sonnets, views of mind that could be put in dialogue with current developments in cognitive science. But if Shakespeare's explicit cognitive and meta-cognitive references are bountiful on the one hand, literary criticism, on the other hand, has focused on the sequence as a narrative of romantic triangulation.

Critical Intervention

As if the axiom of reading a sonnet were the addressee, scholars have compared the first 126 sonnets, addressed to the fair youth, against the rest of

the sonnets (127–152), the poems that address the dark lady. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, first published in 1985, Eve Sedgwick compares the sections on the dark lady to those on the fair youth, maintaining that “homosexual [. . .] male intertextuality” is the heritage of the sonnets. Sedgwick famously clarifies that this economy of relations is achieved through consolidating heterosexual (and not an immediate homosexual) male bonding, a bonding predicated, Sedgwick argues, on the exclusion and objectification of the female, the dark lady.²³⁸ Sedgwick exposes a form of misogyny at the heart of the Western canon. In her essay “Sex without Issue,” Valerie Traub, too, sees the dynamic in the sonnets as an unsympathetic process, but Traub uses the beleaguered status of male-female love to redefine the heterosexual love of the lady as sodomitical, a reversal of the heteronormativity typically accepted as the basis of Western culture. That is, it is male-female love that is the aberration in the sonnet sequence. “Why, then, does

²³⁸ Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985), 28. This relational figuring creates gender asymmetry, argues Sedgwick, and a demonizing of the female figure. The dark lady as a nexus for male bonding assumes that Renaissance poetry was working in traditions that cooperated to consistently undermine female subjectivity, or failed to imagine the existence of women’s imaginations.

misogyny seem to accompany male-male love so readily in the Sonnets?" Traub asks.²³⁹

Margreta de Grazia similarly notes that sodomy needs to be redefined: this time it is the race of the dark other in the sonnets to the lady that is the threat to white male hegemony.²⁴⁰ Gleaning the notion of the other from postcolonial theory, de Grazia argues that the speaker's relationship to the lady is sodomitical because of her darkness, which is the invisible "scandal of the sonnets." De Grazia's method results in a "reading of fairness as an emergent ideology of white supremacy" and a "fetish of whiteness."²⁴¹

²³⁹ Valerie Traub, "Sex without Issue: Sodomy, Reproduction, and Signification in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 2000), 439.

²⁴⁰ Margreta de Grazia, "The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Shakespeare Survey* 46 (1993), 35–49. See also by the same author, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991).

²⁴¹ See also Kim F. Hall, "'These Bastard Signs of Fair': Literary Whiteness in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), 64–83. "The accompanying emphasis on property, wealth, and lineage that is so pronounced in the sonnets is also

The most prominent critical readings of the sonnets participate in a mode of criticism termed by de Grazia as “the scandal of the sonnets.” Since the 1980s, scholars have complicated but for the most part have maintained this approach, where the sonnets’ ultimate meaning is held in the contested imaginary for the site(s) and subjects for sexual penetration, sexual reproduction, and romantic devotion.²⁴²

linked to ‘race’ in its earliest usage and runs throughout discourses of beauty in the period” (80).

²⁴² In her 2000 article “Will in Overplus: Recasting Misogyny in Shakespeare’s Sonnets” (*ELH* 75.3 (2008): 737–766), Kathryn Schwartz complicates Sedgwick’s reading of the overt gender dynamics of the sonnets by describing a kind of textual unconscious. “If misogyny places women outside the privileged negotiations of masculine autonomy, and if sonnet sequences give poetic form to that social project,” Schwartz writes, “these sonnets of will expose the factitiousness of such moves. In its most recognizably misogynist moments, the sequence thoroughly unsettles the cultural truisms to which it refers” (739). By stating that the sonnets communicate both dominant ideology and the exposure of its bad faith, Schwartz deconstructs the political project of the sonnets.

In terms of textuality, literary references often work to help us identify socially and in embodied ways with writers and subjects. Literary theorist Hannah Wojciehowski and neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese in a recent collaboration have called this Feeling of Body (FOB), or “empathic co-feeling with others activated by writings and registered within our own bodies.”²⁴³ Wojciehowski and Gallese, like Bolens and others, emphasize the connection between the embodied experience and the simulation of a literary text.

“Of the Wide World”

Sonnet 107 is an axis in the sequence, demonstrating how poetic practices of Renaissance England are formative of (and formed by) colonialism and miscegenation. Shakespeare powerfully conflates economic and geopolitical schemas with the speaker’s subjectivity. It is important that the “prophetic soul of the wide world,” like the speaker, is rhetorically assigned the act of dreaming.

Nor mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Uncertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,
Since ’spite of him I’ll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o’er dull and speechless tribes;

²⁴³ Chapelle Wojciehowski and Gallese, “How Stories Make Us Feel,” 4.

And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

This sonnet signals how literacy connects to colonial ideology in the Renaissance. With romantic and idyllic language, the speaker describes his “dream” of encompassing love for the youth and immortality in poetry. The speaker’s dream contradicts the activities ascribed to “death,” who will “insult o’er dull and speechless tribes.” The poem conflates Shakespeare’s hopes of meta-literary immortality, therefore, with colonial, or worldly power, and thus insinuates the role of literacy in colonial expansion. The powers of Western literacy could immediately be held up against the oral language practices of groups from the southern hemisphere, or eastern locales, in the Renaissance. Writing separates the youth and his admirer the poet from peoples without scribal culture. A reference to the “wide world,” and its attendant non-Western cultures, is a further affirmation of the xenophobic core of Renaissance literacy.

In all of its frightening beauty, this one sonnet demonstrates the danger and threat of intertextuality and writing. That is, these forms could be deployed explicitly for the propagation and vitality of one group of people, one author, one text. The self-selecting attributes of Western rhetoric call into question the ethics of cognitive aesthetics. Therefore, poetic forms often represent (if they do not enact) broad-scale injustices, by developing new representations of life, and by making any horrific consequences (such as genocide or pillage) into a form of

abstraction.²⁴⁴ The “wide world” here is not overtly geopolitical but ascendant. By seeing how the sonnets depict spatial terms (especially in relation to mind or literacy), we can begin to connect these discourses back to the politics of the sonnets. Attending to ideas of thought or cognition does not mean we must leave behind ideology. I begin to suggest (although much more work needs to be done here) that ideology can be traced through a wider set of perceptual and spatial structures, activated in strategic ways across the sonnet sequence. If we connect the way that mind and space are communicated, we find new avenues for discussing ideology in ways that are connected to perception itself.

²⁴⁴ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993), 62–3. Latour criticizes linguistic philosophy or semantics. Latour identifies as those who have made “discourse not a transparent intermediary that would put the human subject in contact with the natural world but a mediator independent of nature and society alike.” Latour’s method of attacking semantics, however, is not at all concerned with the advances in the philosophy of autonomous language, but rather, Latour is concerned that linguists “themselves have limited their enterprise to discourse alone.” He sees the flaw not in the disciplinary practices of linguistic analysis but in the failure of linguists to be more ambitious for the explanatory power of their work, the failure to connect their work with anything outside of itself.

Conclusion

What do we gain or potentially lose by thinking about Shakespeare's mental processes and the form of poetry, as opposed to procreation, sexualized desire, and scandal? I have argued that cognitivism might actually broaden the stakes of sex in the sonnets, by giving a point of reference outside of the dynamics of scandal. In this chapter, I have drawn out Shakespeare's references to cognition: both his reflections on how love changes the brain, as well as sonnets about how poetry alters the brain.²⁴⁵ Cognitivism—when *properly scaled* for use in literary studies²⁴⁶—helps us to rediscover the currents of force beneath our critical heritage of the sonnets. My use of the word “scale” indicates a mapping of data onto established grids with multiple points of reference in empirical observation, such as Tufte recommends. Textual materialism, cognitive materialism, and the historical record should be coordinated more precisely with a sense of the proper scaling of these different registers to the needs of literary analysis. By beginning to find points of comparison between these different

²⁴⁵ Malafouris, “The Brain-Artefact Interface (BAI),” 264–273.

²⁴⁶ See Edward Tufte, *Beautiful Evidence* (Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 2006). Tufte's “Principles of Analytical Design” outlines the ethics and efficacy of information design with regard to visuals.

indexes of empirical information, we can confirm what elements are best suited for describing the way that poetry intersects with life.

Finally, I believe a cognitive approach can show the mental and embodied practices of an immersive writing culture. That is, we can begin to theorize how Renaissance cultural practices became embedded in brain-based learning, and likewise, how the brain retained and then quickly adapted culturally-bound constructs to meet social and economic imperatives. Beginning to see the sonnet's role, finally, in this "mutually constitutive" process, has been the specific aim of this chapter.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ Concepts of autopoiesis from the hard sciences as well as from cybernetic theory could be productively integrated into a future study of the sonnets. See N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999), 11: "Thus the center of interest for autopoiesis shifts from the cybernetics of the observed system to the cybernetics of the observer. Autopoiesis also changes the explanation of what circulates through the system to make it work as a system. The emphasis now is on the mutually constitutive interactions between the components of a system rather than on message, signal, or information."

Epilogue

Integrating Science into Literary Studies

Science begins with the world we have to live in, accepting its data and trying to explain its laws. From there, it moves towards the imagination: it becomes a mental construct, a model of a possible way of interpreting experience. Art, on the other hand, begins with the world we construct, not with the world we see. It starts with the imagination and works towards ordinary experience; that is, it tries to make itself as convincing and as recognizable as it can.

—Northrop Frye

Shifting the emphasis from technological determinism to competing, contingent, embodied narratives about the scientific developments is one way to liberate the resources of narrative so that they work against the grain of abstracting running through the teleology of disembodiment. Another way is to read literary texts alongside scientific theories. In articulating the connections that run through these two discursive realms, I want to entangle abstract form and material particularity such that the reader will find it increasingly difficult to maintain the perception that they are separate and discrete entities.

—N. Katherine Hayles

Whatever label we use, we are always attempting to retie the Gordian knot by crisscrossing, as often as we have to, the divide that separates exact knowledge and the exercise of power—let us say nature and culture.

—Bruno Latour²⁴⁸

A focus on the phenomenology, neurology—and ultimately, the biology—of poetic activity connects this dissertation to scientific discourses. To those of us

²⁴⁸ Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1964), 23; N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 22–23; Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 3.

who are committed to other methodologies in Renaissance studies, this application of neuroscience does not need to be an outlier position. Consider the activity of contemporary neuroscientists, who propose which neurons cause various affective states and who trace locations of memory along brain tissues. What is a brain scan, if not a representation of thoughts (we might say a poem) from which cognitive scientists excavate patterns illuminating the inner life of a human subject?²⁴⁹ Our common endeavor is to understand the workings of the imagination. Neuroscientific research tries to pinpoint how thoughts, plans, or dreams interact with the material world, much like how literary criticism posits how subjectivity is fashioned and negotiated through discourse. But in discovering the circuits between outer and inner universes, traditional

²⁴⁹ Parts of my argument are modeled after Henry S. Turner's incorporation of scientific ideas in "Life Science: Rude Mechanicals, Human Mortals, Posthuman Shakespeare," *South Central Review* 26.1–2 (2009), 197–217. "What is a laboratory, after all, if not an astonishing machine (we might even call it a theater) for producing many different 'difficult,' information-rich materials, across many types of media, in various states of stability and modification, sometimes improvised, sometimes highly codified, sometimes immediately legible, at other times subject to intense debate?" (197).

neuroscience has privileged an object of inquiry that appears strange to humanists: the anatomic brain.

The interdisciplinary methods of cognitive literary criticism are at once vital and troubling, to which recent work to maintain the axioms of social theory will attest.²⁵⁰ A cognitive literary method, such as the one featured in the previous chapters, sees forms of poetry, such as the sonnet, as adaptive technologies of the mind. This would seem to de-emphasize the sonnets' articulation of colonial desire, misogyny, and power. For cultural criticism, this move can potentially be seen as retrograde, a return to textuality before deconstruction, where texts can be seen as natural and inherent. We might appear to be returning, as it were, to what Francis Barker noted as the emergence of Western hegemony: "Life needs only the perceiving mind, and the writing hand, tracing and recording its contours, to become text. The apparency of the bourgeois world and its texts are born."²⁵¹ Given that readings based in social theory are meant to coordinate with (or at least have as a point of reference in) the social order, literary criticism-as-science

²⁵⁰ See Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx was Right* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2011). See also Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York: Picador, 2008), and *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008).

²⁵¹ Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen & Co., 1984), 5.

warrants a certain amount of suspicion. But scientific approaches can raise the stakes of cultural criticism by showing how discourses reflect larger epistemologies. While science-as-literature approaches seem to de-emphasize ideology, they actually bring to light the way the literary imagination is imbricated into the biological and adaptive exchanges of subjects and environments (how we move and live in the world).²⁵²

For a critic attempting to understand Sidney's poetry in relation to the Petrarchan tradition, or for someone coordinating manuscript writings with Elizabethan political faction, the zooming in on the brain is admittedly counter-intuitive. And while recent advances have mobilized cognitive study from the cranium to the rest of the body (embodied cognition)²⁵³ and to the systems and

²⁵² Our closest correlate in the humanities is the work of Foucault on biopolitics, who works from society to biology, rather than biology to society. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1978).

²⁵³ On "embodied cognition," see Anthony Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Penguin, 2000). See also Vittorio Gallese, "The 'Shared Manifold' Hypothesis: From Mirror Neurons to Empathy," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8.5–7(2001), 33–50.

physical environments in which human subjects work (distributed cognition),²⁵⁴ it seems to me that the changing sites of cognitivist inquiry might further obscure how it can be scaled to humanistic readings of literature. What is the threshold between literary and scientific disciplines? How do we get our bearings for applications of scientific discovery about the brain, when those discoveries appear to be rapidly advancing? These questions cannot be easily answered or resolved and require strategic, collaborative approaches that attempt to scale scientific knowledge in appropriate ways.

Despite our lack of clarity on the inclusion of these developing meta-fields into more traditional modes of literary studies, many of us are open to the idea

²⁵⁴ John M. Roberts, Mary Douglas, Edwin Hutchins, Margaret Syverson, and others have looked at how human subjects interact within complex environments, using objects, memory, and collaborated activity to produce knowledge and to enact complex activities. On distributed cognition, see Edwin Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995); John M. Rogers, "The Self-Management of Cultures," *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Ward Goodenough (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 433–453; Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1986); and Margaret Syverson, *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1999).

that history, literacy, and culture should be re-imagined with one foot planted in scientific knowledge. The axioms of evolutionary biology have become a central feature of the academy today, if subsisting with marginalized status in the humanities. But, as literary critics, we are also aware of the danger of dabbling in fields of study where we lack the training (we don't recognize the patterning of synapses on a brain scan, for example, nor do we think we ought to). In this dissertation, I have suggested that it is productive to make cognitive data interact usefully with—or even usefully disrupt—humanist literary canons. This disruption can be especially productive if it helps us to define literary study as the historic interpretation of brain-based (imaginative) culture. As Liza Zunshine says in her recent definition of the study of cognition and culture, the goal of such work “is to understand the evolving relationship between two immensely complex, historically situated systems—the human mind and cultural artifacts, such as novels, poems, or paintings.”²⁵⁵ We can specify this “complex,” “evolving relationship,” moreover, by showing how literary studies has traditionally attended to mental events, the mind, or the imagination.

²⁵⁵ Lisa Zunshine, “Introduction: What is Cognitive Cultural Studies?” *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Zunshine (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010), 3.

At worst, literature-as-science could be seen as the re-entry of a bourgeois politics, masquerading in the guise of empiricism. From the perspective of social theorists, scientific techniques could be pernicious by separating descriptions of how texts work from the values that render those workings politically oppressive or radical. This danger is attenuated in the study of Western poetry, texts that often make their own embodiments invisible, seeming to transcend the material world, not to mention the social order. As Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin write in *Post-colonial Shakespeares*, the canon of Shakespeare was part of a program for “producing invisibility that fuels white hegemony.”²⁵⁶ Thus, apolitical readings of Shakespeare might reify what Loomba and Orkin name the “larger economy of whiteness in early modern England.”²⁵⁷ This raises the stakes of whether we choose a politicized versus apolitical (scientific) criticism. The leveraging of biology can fuel not only sexual but also racial forms of oppression. As Margreta de Grazia argues, “It is Shakespeare’s gynerastic longings for a black mistress that are perverse and menacing, precisely because they threaten to raze the very

²⁵⁶ Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, “Introduction: Shakespeare and the post-colonial question,” *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, eds. Loomba and Orkin (New York: Routledge, 1998), 81.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

distinctions his poems to the fair boy strain to preserve.”²⁵⁸ Indeed, arguments over the Western canon negotiate exactly the intersections of the body and political ideology.

How do we judge which sites of the material world best illuminate texts? What form of matter does or should preoccupy our scholarship? Indeed, the meaning of the “material” and the nature of “matter” is up for grabs now between humanities and contemporary science methodologies. To return to the question of matter and its contested disciplinary, I would like to start to define where this essay locates the material, and how it negotiates the role of contemporary science. While more exhaustive definitions of “the material” and “matter” warrant a separate, longer treatment, I propose the following parameters for defining Renaissance material textuality:

1. Textual-studies scholars generally see the design, scale, and paratextual elements of the print or manuscript text as the *matter* of the text.²⁵⁹ While foundational for empirical studies of

²⁵⁸ Margreta de Grazia. “The Scandal of Shakespeare’s Sonnets,” *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. Stanley Wells, 24 (1994), 48.

²⁵⁹ Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993): 255–83. See also

the book, categorizing materiality with the finite features of an artifact obfuscates the more dynamic integration of books and writing with the human life form. Textualist techniques leave us with points of reference, but not holistic accounts, of the material text.

2. Cultural theorists use term “material culture” to indicate the trade tools, clothing items, books, and other artifacts of historical subjects, which can provide an “understanding of culture.”²⁶⁰ However, artifacts are not only evidence of culture—they signal biological life and physiological minds. Without an intervening scientism, these methods potentially disconnect culture from its role in the perpetuation of humans as a species, i.e. social theory as a form of a fundamentalism.
3. “Brain-based psychological literary criticism,” rather than accounting for the material with a larger schema, often is

Coleman Hutchison, “Breaking the Book Known as Q,” *PMLA* 121.1 (2006): 33–66.

²⁶⁰ See Thomas J. Schelereth, *Material Culture: A Research Guide* (Lawrence, KS: UP of Kansas, 1985), 3.

explicitly materialist.²⁶¹ My notion of the material assumes that the text is not explicable by neurobiological phenomena alone.

An ecumenical definition of “matter,”²⁶² in contrast to the methods above, explores the points of contact between what is considered physicalist and what is considered cultural.²⁶³ An ecumenical method therefore avoids an undesirable

²⁶¹ See Mary Crane and Alan Richardson, “Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity,” *Mosaic* 32.2 (1999):123–40.

²⁶² The *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition of the word “matter” shows that it is not until the late seventeenth century that the word comes into usage as a printed object except in the case of the book. See 10a. “Material for expression; fact or thought as material for a book, speech, etc. Now rare or merged in sense.” See also 9a. “Senses relating to physical substance. ’ earthly corporeal, as opposed to spiritual or mental” and 17a. “printed or written material,” “matter, n.1.” *OED Online*. September 2012. Oxford University Press. 10 December 2012. <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115083?rskey=QB88W0&result=1>>.

²⁶³ By using a comparative strategy (holding two disciplines next to each other), I hope to respond to “anti-universalist” concerns, while avoiding using cognition as a rhetorical analogy, which would collapse the disciplines through metaphor. David Mialls, “Literary Reading: Empirical and Theoretical Studies”

consequence, where contemporary literary study becomes attendant to the economies of modern science. As Carla Mazzio recently has argued, the incorporation of scientific modes in Renaissance studies “need not be a teleological drive toward the new sciences.”²⁶⁴ Mazzio underscores a dialectic between science and art that can be traced from the early modern period to today.

Indeed, literary texts cannot be accounted for by neurological phenomena alone. Narratives of social history, as well as items of the historical record, continue to be vital in describing human lifeways, which cannot be supplanted by scientific data. Imagine trying to understand the depictions of the body by Albrecht Dürer without hearing the story of his contact with Martin Luther, his humanist patrons, or his travels to Venice, Italy.²⁶⁵ Even more important than revealing how our field connects to other disciplines, therefore, is our need to

Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies, Zunshine, Ed. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010).

²⁶⁴ Carla Mazzio, “Shakespeare and Science, c. 1600,” *South Central Review* 26.1–2 (2009): 3.

²⁶⁵ For more on the interplay between Dürer and his humanist contacts and patrons, see David Price, *Albrecht Dürer’s Renaissance: Humanism, Reformation, and the Art of Faith* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2006).

claim ground for humanistic ways of seeing. We need to acknowledge the unique legacy of humanist inquiry, as well as its limitations. With increasing opportunities to coordinate with compelling advances in biology and brain-based sciences, we can begin to disseminate the work of cultural studies into the hard sciences. This strategic intervention is urgent, especially given the onset of privatization of the university more broadly and considering that the sciences and engineering are a vector for precisely that kind of colonization of university thinking. With such high stakes, I have drawn a rather spare architecture for the sort of work that needs to be done. It is my hope that others may append, redress, and embody these techniques in radical and altering ways.

Appendix A

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This dissertation was typed by Noël Clare Radley on a network of devices, including a Macintosh computer.